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35 CENTS

# The SMART SET

*A Magazine of  
Cleverness*

LORD  
DUNSANY

THEODORE  
DREISER

WILLA  
SIBERT  
CATHER

TEN OTHER  
BIG  
FEATURES

*Archie Gunn*





# The SMART SET

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## CONTENTS

HOW THE LOST CAUSES WERE REMOVED FROM VALHALLA . . . . .	Lord Dunsany . . . . .	1
THE REASON . . . . .	May Holt . . . . .	2
MISTRESS OF THE HORSE ( <i>complete novelette</i> ) . . . . .	Richmond Brooks Barrett . . . . .	3
THE CHRONOLOGY OF A BORE . . . . .	Ford Douglas . . . . .	31
WANTON . . . . .	David Morton . . . . .	33
THE PROPOSAL . . . . .	Eric Paul May . . . . .	34
SANCTUARY . . . . .	Theodore Dreiser . . . . .	35
A COLLEGE EDUCATION . . . . .	T. F. Mitchell . . . . .	52
RUST . . . . .	Mary Carolyn Davies . . . . .	52
CITY FOLKS . . . . .	Thyra Samter Winslow . . . . .	53
THE OPPONENT . . . . .	L. M. Hussey . . . . .	61
POLYCHROME AT EVENING . . . . .	Jean Allen . . . . .	68
PERSONALLY CONDUCTED . . . . .	J. L. Morgan . . . . .	69
SHADOW-HOUR . . . . .	George O'Neil . . . . .	75
GARMENTS . . . . .	Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff . . . . .	76
RÉPÉTITION GÉNÉRALE . . . . .	George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken . . . . .	77
ONE WIFE . . . . .	Theodosia Garrison . . . . .	85
PHILOSOPHERS ( <i>one-act play</i> ) . . . . .	Morris Colman . . . . .	87
TOURING HELL . . . . .	Helen Drake . . . . .	94
HER BOSS . . . . .	Willia Sibert Cather . . . . .	95
THE MISTY LAKE . . . . .	Charles Wharton Stork . . . . .	108
ENCHANTERS OF MEN ( <i>eleventh article</i> ) . . . . .	Thornton Hall . . . . .	109
ENCOUNTER . . . . .	Babette Deutsch . . . . .	115
THE CLERK . . . . .	Rita Wellman . . . . .	117
IN COURT . . . . .	Milnes Levick . . . . .	123
THE DREAM . . . . .	Muna Lee . . . . .	125
DEO OPTIMO MAXIMO ( <i>in the French</i> ) . . . . .	Han Ryner . . . . .	129
A FOREST RENDEZVOUS . . . . .	William Griffith . . . . .	130
DREISER'S PLAY—AND SOME OTHERS . . . . .	George Jean Nathan . . . . .	131
MARK TWAIN . . . . .	H. L. Mencken . . . . .	138

AND

HALF A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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# The SMART SET

Edited by  
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN  
and  
H. L. MENCKEN

## How The Lost Causes Were Removed From Valhalla

By Lord Dunsany

**I**N the dark, at the dawn of time, before peoples began, the spirits of the nations rose up out of their lands and trooped away to Valhalla to be given each a Cause. And when each one had his Cause then all was ready, and tribes arose in the valleys and peoples began.

The spirits were given their causes by Those that were greater than they, each spirit choosing in turn from all the causes there were. It was thus, long since, in the dark, that the Nations came by their causes. And some of those spirits chose well and some chose ill, and others chose what causes were still to be had when the swifter spirits had chosen and flown away.

All but the spirits of Ireland went thence with a cause that day. In intense greenery of emerald moss and amongst scarlet mosses, in a low land circled by hills all misty morning and evening, with a moist wind blowing across that even then was mournful, dreaming of deeds of gods that were ancient even then, and brooding then as now upon things that cannot be, the Spirit of Ireland sat. And a rumour came to him there such as passes from spirit to spirit, and he knew that the spirits had chosen, and feared Valhalla was bare. And wailing he went in haste, and came the last to Valhalla. Nothing had they to give him, They that were greater than he, but the lost causes that the other spirits had left. In all Valhalla were lost causes only.

"Begob," said the Spirit of Ireland, and his wild eyes twinkled and shone, "by the Holy Mother of God they're after leaving the best."

And eagerly he gathered them all and tenderly carried them thence.

And so there were no lost causes left in Valhalla to trouble the pitiful Gods.



# The Reason

By May Holt

HE swore that I was the first woman he had ever loved.

After he had slipped the platinum-set diamond on my willing finger, I smiled into his dark eyes. He crushed my unprotesting lips in a deep kiss . . .

"You are the first woman I have ever loved," he murmured again.

I hid my smile on his khaki shoulder.

For I had known his sister at boarding school. She was my room-mate. We always talked in the dark, long after bed-time.

So of course I knew all about the flapper of his prep-school days.

And the red-haired actress.

And the blonde manicure girl.

And the dazzling débutante he used to cocktail with at the Ritz.

And the widow whose income was mysterious.

And the pretty dancer in the Follies.

And the brunette in Paris.

And the emerald-eyed houri who smiled enigmatically through Egyptian cigarette smoke . . .

Another kiss . . .

He was still whispering, "You are the very first, darling . . ."

And he will never know that it is because I am *not* the first that I love him so much.



PHILOSOPHY, in a man, is the capacity to see humour in the delight of a girl who has just snared him.



IF a woman were as beautiful as her lover believes her to be, he would have more competition.



A WET man is not afraid of rain, nor an engaged man of sad eyes.





# Mistress of the Horse

A Complete Novelette

By *Richmond Brooks Barrett*

## CHAPTER I

CHARMIAN MONTAGUE was very happy and at the same time anxious. The irresistible welling of pity in her heart but added to the vague unrest she felt and gave the last luxurious thrill to her senses. She yearned to console, to soothe the man beside her at the luncheon table; instead, she sat up quite straight and laughed at him with cool self-possession.

Thomas Trevena had admitted to her that he felt fagged. He had not gone so far as to confess his head ached; but Charmian knew he was suffering. She could tell how miserable he was from the eyes fixed on her. Few people, when they are not actually racked themselves, can measure the agony of others and respond with full pity; Charmian, however, could intensely understand, indeed could almost draw the victim's pain to herself. So today she wanted to nurse Trevena and feel the throb in his temples die out under her firm fingers.

Nobody would have suspected that Charmian was sentimental,—nobody, that is, except Trevena. He knew what she was thinking; even as he grinned broadly and treated everybody to ridiculous jokes, he was sure she noticed the dumb bewilderment of pain clouding his gaze. He could always fool her family; it was obvious they considered a man of his sort impervious to physical failings.

This was as it should be. He didn't

want the solicitude of anybody in the world but Charmian; her ministrations alone he loved and longed for. Charmian backed him up. At the proper moment she was accustomed to gather him and his headache to her heart; but, by a tacit agreement, she had adopted an offhand coolness towards him when they were not alone together. In company they were, with their painstaking omission of all that was perceptibly tender, for all the world like two small boys chaffing each other.

"You're a fool, Tommy!"

Thus Charmian greeted a sally of Trevena's.

He was unperturbed. "I don't care what anybody says, a rehearsal isn't right. A weddin' would be much more solemn without fixin's. It's no credit to a man and woman to act as if they'd been through it all before. A show for your friends—that's what it is now; pretty soon people'll be hirin' a theater and sellin' tickets."

"Not a bad idea either," vouchsafed Charmian's father from his end of the table. "Then we could eliminate presents—make a pot of the profits and furnish a house that way."

"Everybody would be nicer, too," Charmian said. "Nowadays the people that give a girl horrid things are sure to be ashamed of themselves and cross. They always do their best to spoil the reception."

Charmian and Trevena were to be married on the following day. The luncheon was a blessed respite from the big entertainments that had been the rule



for the past fortnight. The Montagues were simply lunching *en famille* and going at the midday meal with characteristic relish. There were Mr. and Mrs. Montague; the three daughters; Geoffrey Carter in the capacity of husband of the eldest; Trevena and his cousin, John Fenwick. A gathering of Montagues, actual and prospective, never lacked zest; these people enjoyed one another.

"I wish you could all have seen Tommy at his bachelor dinner," remarked Geoffrey Carter. "He was like the corpse at a wake—just a silent excuse for all the fun."

"So you were a wet blanket!" Agatha, Geoffrey's wife, shook her head at the vision evoked.

"Not a *wet* blanket," demurred Trevena. "I didn't touch a drop y'know."

He nudged Charmian triumphantly after this blaze of wit.

"Personally, I can't picture Willoughby as best man," opined Mr. Montague. "The marriage ceremony is short, to be sure; but it will be too long for Willoughby. He will be chatting with everybody about the altar, interrupting the minister—"

"And winking at Charmian," cut in Geoffrey Carter. "He will try to introduce a ribald note, watch if he doesn't."

"He will do his best to eclipse poor Tommy, of course," said Charmian.

"Why Tommy?" Agatha wanted to know. "A groom is *nothing*, anyhow, at a wedding. Willoughby won't be content unless he gets more attention than the bride's gown."

"The groom is nothing," echoed Trevena. "He's no better than a chorusman or what the vaudeville chaps call a feeder," he sighed. "Oh, Lord!"

That tickled everybody. Trevena joined vociferously in the general laugh.

Luncheon over, he departed.

"Got to meet Willoughby," he explained. "He's pulling in on the four-fifteen."

Charmian slipped out of the drawing-room with him. She closed the door carefully.

Then,

"Does the poor head still ache?" she asked.

"Oh, I'm just kind of tired," replied the ungrammatical Tommy.

Charmian pressed her cool fingers to his throbbing temples.

"Oh, my darling Tommy," she murmured. "Your head is so hot, so hot."

Trevena gathered her to him. A long kiss over, he laughed.

"The damned thing's gone now," he announced.

"Come early to Agatha's dinner," she pleaded.

She was walking beside him, one of his hands in both of hers.

At the street door she relinquished her hold. He kissed her again and was off.

Charmian gave the footman at the door a gay smile. Old Townsend was the only man besides Trevena who ever got a glimpse of the girl off guard.

## CHAPTER II

AGATHA CARTER'S dinner was to be followed by a rehearsal of the marriage ceremony. Charmian was confident it would all be perfectly delightful. Agatha's affairs never failed of the right jollity.

Then the rehearsal! Tommy and Willoughby would be ridiculous; Charmian smiled in anticipation of the grotesque capers they might cut. Yes, decidedly it was going to be a lark.

Agatha's guests—that is, all but two of them—arrived with a punctuality quite amazing for slipshod New York. The dilatory two, however, were necessary for the success of the dinner, or so Agatha thought at first; they happened to be Thomas Trevena and Willoughby Hewlett.

The assembled company behaved beautifully in the crisis; Agatha should have loved them all. As a matter of fact, she was so puzzled and angry that her sight soon became blurred by tears; the result was a gradual, kaleidoscopic running-together of her guests into what seemed to the hostess a monster that shrieked after her its need of food.



People *were* noisy; but, far from complaining about the gnawing of their tummies, they chattered and laughed almost to the point of hysteria in the vain effort to put Agatha at her ease. They would be thunderstruck—so their attitude implied—if anybody should drop the information that dinner ought to have been announced long ago.

The Carter servants at the telephone infuriated Central with their angry outcries. Mrs. Carter herself made sporadic attempts to get into communication with Trevena.

The man at his house gave most unsatisfactory replies to Aggie's vicious questions; the brute seemed to be keeping something back. Mr. Trevena was not at home—that was all. The clubs likewise had nothing to impart in regard to the truant's whereabouts. It was exasperating; it was incredible.

Geoffrey Carter did his best to quiet Agatha. He attempted to reason with her, then to joke lightly.

His wife paid no attention at first; soon, however, the persistent cheerfulness of the man began to irk.

In a flash, she turned on him and rattled out her protest like a very vixen.

Geoffrey retaliated in hot indignation and swore at her. For the remainder of that evening they avoided each other's gaze. Both felt sheepish and guilty.

Charmian, pale and heartsick, at last took matters into her own hands.

"Agatha," she said, "don't be silly. You will have to drop Tommy and Willoughby. You can't keep people waiting any longer."

"I never heard of such conduct!" cried Agatha. "I don't see how you can take it so quietly. The whole thing is an insult to you! Oh, it's disgraceful!"

"I know." Charmian granted it. "But you've got to do something."

"Do something?" Aggie almost shrieked. "Haven't I done everything under God's heaven?"

"Yes, you have." Charmian alone, in this atmosphere of frenzy and madness, remained calm. "They don't deserve such thoughtful treatment. Please cut them and start dinner."

Agatha, her hands on the point of tearing down the elaborate structure reared from her red hair, confronted Charmian:

"But I can't tell the truth, can I?"

"Everybody knows Willoughby," replied Charmian. "People will guess correctly enough."

"But I must give some explanation." Agatha was stubborn.

Then, with apparent irrelevance,

"Everybody knows Tommy, too," she tossed off,

"Go ahead and lie then," exclaimed Charmian, a strident note sounding now in her voice, "only get it over *quickly*."

Agatha, usually very deft at this sort of thing, was for once too bewildered to formulate an excuse.

Charmian supplied one. "Say Tommy is ill,—that you've had Willoughby on the wire and he doesn't dare leave him. That is good enough; everybody will know, anyhow, what's wrong."

With a wail of fury, Agatha dashed away to her guests with the alarming tidings.

Charmian, under the spur of fresh inspiration, cut her off in mid-career.

"Agatha, I am going home. You can tell them I've rushed off to the poor dear's bedside. That will simplify everything."

"But they may show up yet," objected Agatha.

"They won't." Charmian was incisive. "And if they do, don't let them in. They wouldn't be fit to appear in company."

Charmian, when she reached her father's house, walked staidly past Townsend and went at once upstairs to her sitting-room. Sinking into a big chair by the fireplace, she remained quite rigid and stiff for a moment; then she put her gloved hands to her face and burst into miserable sobs.

For the first time she was considering with something like terror the weakness of the man she loved; the problems of her future were forcing themselves relentlessly upon her. What was Trevena's appeal, after all?—irrepressible good-nature and a compelling



charm! That he had for years been dissolute she knew; everybody was acquainted with the stories of his capricious, thoughtless progress through life. The people of Charmian's set accepted him without bothering to condemn his actions; even her father could chuckle at the strings of scandalous chronicles regarding Trevena that were current. Brought up short by the prospect of his daughter's possible unhappiness as Tommy's wife, Mr. Montague could clear his conscience facily by asserting that young wags who had had a fling seldom failed to settle down once they picked the right girl. So society in general dismissed the subject, in spite of the examples everywhere of men who remained delightfully indifferent to common decency after marriage.

For her part, Charmian would have brooked no interference from anybody so far as Trevena was concerned. She had been trained to view masculine lapses with a certain careless levity, with a tinge of frank amusement. She loved Trevena; she could not doubt his infatuation for her. Wasn't that enough? The fact that he was dissipated had never worried her; it but added to his fascination and lent him the power weakness, combined with lovable graciousness, is apt to exert.

Tenderness and a pity approaching the maternal were awakened in Charmian by Trevena's engaging lack of will-power; a quite discernible helplessness in this physically imposing man had from the first arrested her and caused her a tremulous solicitude. She had up to this time had few fears; but tonight she felt frightened at the thought of his irresponsibility.

At last Charmian sat up with decision. She was a fool to act like this. Tommy was a dear; he was adorable, in fact. What more natural than that he should kick over the traces the night before his wedding? She forgave him, of course. He loved her. Surely that was sufficient.

Charmian, as she smoothed her dark hair and stared at the blaze in the fireplace, presented an attractive picture.

Her face, thin and without colour, had none of the vulgarity that mere prettiness shows. Her complexion was like an opaque but lustrous film; the tissue seemed as smooth and delicate as gardenia petals and possessed the same glowing pallor. Despite this peculiarity, Charmian did not appear emaciated; rather she had the air of distinction, of macabre beauty. Her eyes, set deep, were dark and very bright, not with an unhealthy glint, but with the sparkle of vivacity. The mouth was large and had an unusual precision of modelling; it was skilfully rouged. Charmian was tall, straight, and thin without angularity.

The telephone at the writing-desk had been buzzing in spasmodic spitefulness for an appreciable time before Charmian noticed it. She silenced the electric disturbance and heard Agatha's voice. The vigorous elder sister could not learn to adapt her tones to the demands of communication over wires. What she was saying was difficult of understanding; it came at Charmian like an ill-suppressed shrieking.

The news was disconcerting. There was as yet no trace of the offenders. Geoffrey Carter and John Fenwick had sallied forth into the night bent on capturing Trevena—at all costs—alive or dead, as Agatha put it. No luck so far! And, Mrs. Carter added, it was well on the road to midnight. The Montagues had just started for home, having delayed as long as possible with the idea of letting Charmian cry it out alone before they showed up.

"But I haven't been crying. How absurd!" Charmian sounded an indignant protest; but Agatha had rung off without waiting to hear it.

The rest of the night was lurid, fiendish.

The Montagues arrived in due time, but without Mr. Montague. He had joined the search party. Irene, the youngest sister, was in tears; Charmian's mother took it upon herself to utter imprecation upon imprecation, all the while striding up and down and wringing her hands. She indignantly



refused to go to bed; it was not until she had sunk exhausted into a chair that she confessed to fatigue.

Then, caught in a cramped doze, she was forced to give up; Charmian bundled her off and thrust her into the arms of a maid with the firm command that she be divested of clothing and tucked willy-nilly between sheets.

Even so, she and Irene ever and again burst in upon Charmian with sleepy excuses. Hadn't they heard the front door? Was Charmian quite sure the telephone hadn't rung?

Irene and Mrs. Montague were really pitiful. They would appear, sometimes swathed in wraps and crazily adjusted slippers, sometimes simply in bare feet and flimsy nightgowns. They would shiver and their teeth would chatter wildly as they stood before Charmian and sought in their poor muddled heads for comforting words before hurrying back to bed. It was all like a fantastic nightmare.

At four in the morning Mr. Montague entered Charmian's sitting-room. To the melancholy headshake with which he greeted his daughter she responded by falling into his arms, there to weep out her weary despair.

"Please go to bed, Charmian dear," he advised. "You must be so tired."

"No, no," she protested. "I can't. Something *may* have happened."

"I almost wish something *had*," he responded, "—for your sake."

Alone once more, Charmian dried her eyes.

Bitter resentment against Trevena had been growing in her heart during the incredibly long hours; but a feeling of pity and a puzzled sense of anxiety had persisted and set her shaking.

Suddenly she thrust everything aside but her anger. That asserted its sway at last.

In a flash she had reached a decision. She would never marry him after this unpardonable treatment; she would go to bed now and *sleep*.

Half undressed, Charmian realized the absurdity of what she was doing. The silence seemed to jangle in her

ears an imperious summons to wakefulness. Switching off the lights, she tried the effect of darkness on her nerves; in a moment, she had called back the comfort of the warm radiance. The blackness about her had been of a choking weight, as if she were sinking through deep water.

She threw a dressing-gown over her shoulders and returned to the sitting-room.

At eight in the morning, Agatha again called her. There was a weary rasp to her voice as she announced,

"We haven't found a trace yet, but John has just started off again."

"Please don't bother to hunt any more," replied Charmian. "I have decided not to get married."

This time it was Charmian who rang off abruptly.

### CHAPTER III

WHEN Trevena left the Montague house, he decided for a walk to the Grand Central Station. Every step he took jarred his head and sent through it an abominable twinge; but at least the fresh air had a vivifying quality that might help things, even though it failed of the direct, tonic power of healing that Charmian's cool fingers possessed. He therefore sent his motor home and strode with a stoical scowl along the pavement.

"My God, Willoughby," remarked Trevena by way of greeting as he shook his friend's hand. "You don't look as if you'd come from the coast. As neat as a pin, you are; not a devilish bit of dirt on you."

"My name is Phoebus Snow," returned Hewlett, delighted at this atrocious *mot*.

"I'm so glad to get back to New York," he went on. "California is splendid for the health, but it *is* crude. I feel covered with provincial rust, really."

"Same old snob," commented Tommy with enthusiasm. "New York's been dull without you—though your be-



in' away has made a man of me, of course."

"Thanks, old chap!" Willoughby smiled. "How's Charmian?"

"Rippin'!" Tommy brightened, despite his racked head. "Charmian wonderful."

"Charmian's a darling," agreed Willoughby. "Look here, Tommy." This after a pause of shrewd appraisal. "You're not looking too damned well."

"I know. I've got a beastly headache," Trevena elucidated.

"Of course you have." Hewlett nodded sagely. "What you need is something to drink. Fancy a man like you on the wagon. Such rot!"

Settled comfortably in Trevena's library, Hewlett returned to the attack.

"Come now, Trevena—I'm thirsty and you're sick. We require stimulants."

Trevena rang promptly.

"I beg your pardon, old man," he apologized. "Drink away. You'll have to excuse me, though."

"Certainly not." Hewlett was firm. "I don't propose to do any solo drinking. Either you join me or I parch before your very eyes."

"It won't do my head any good," Trevena protested. "Besides, when I am off it, why go back to it?"

"Go back to it!" Hewlett mocked. "If a man's afraid to take one swallow for sociability's sake, he must be very far gone. You're no gentleman if you've got to such a pass. You'll be talking of cures next."

"Good Lord!" groaned Trevena. "You're still posin', I see. You'll talk of Keeley cures yourself soon enough, I'll wager."

Hewlett stiffened, wide-eyed.

"What under the sun do you mean?" he cried. "I shall never be in danger. I may die of drink one day, but the world at large will know nothing of it. That will be a secret between me and my insides. I shall always be desirable externally. No, indeed! I'm not the type to need a cure."

As he spoke, Hewlett poured out two doubtful drinks.

"Now, Burr," he confided to Trevena's man, "take this to that ass over there," indicating Thomas, "and use force if necessary."

Trevena sighed and took the proffered glass.

He closed his eyes and winced.

"I swear," he announced melodramatically, "I could sympathize with a fellow who cut his throat for no other reason than because he had a headache—even if it *was* the day before his weddin'. I'm surprised I haven't done it myself."

"Well, here goes," he wound up. "It may do my head good."

Hewlett scowled. "Don't think I'm trying to be a nurse for you; I don't want you to do this for medicinal purposes. The point is, I'm afraid you're a bore unstimulated. And I'm not in the mood to be bored."

Trevena smiled.

"We're a blamed funny pair, aren't we?" he commented.

"We are." Hewlett was prompt. "You haven't any brains; and I'm top-heavy with 'em."

They laughed.

Trevena considered his companion's glib chatter as wit of the highest order. It never occurred to him that practice might get anybody almost as far. He thought Hewlett a charged wire that sparkled and cracked directly it was touched; his admiration was unbounded.

Willoughby had always found it easy to manage Trevena. He would scoff epigrammatically for a few minutes and then dictate terms to his malleable friend. So today, professing a reluctance to drink alone, he had been able in less than half an hour to break down the defences poor Trevena had been weeks rearing.

"And Agatha's giving a dinner to-night; and there's to be a rehearsal." Hewlett shook his head several times dubiously. "I declare that's silly; a wedding rehearsal reeks so of innocence and the sweet girl graduate. There's no place for a fellow such as you in that sort of ritual."



"And how about—?"

"Oh, about me?" Hewlett interrupted. "I shall be all right. I am deft enough to be even a sponsor in baptism gracefully. It's not your morals that unfit you for this, Tommy; it's rather your big feet."

Trevena had brightened by this time. The veins in his head that had seemed to the bursting point were throbbing now with a gentler beat. The insistent pound was vaguely muffled at last. He yawned and grinned in bland satisfaction.

"I believe I'm a bit better," he confessed and sheepishly reached for another drink.

Hewlett had already poured himself a fifth glass. So it went. The afternoon wore on and the men became very loquacious, Trevena in a boisterous vein, Hewlett with an increasing felicity of language. Six o'clock found them both unsteady.

"Time to dress for dinner," Hewlett announced, lying flat on the divan with one leg stretched out and the other between his clasped hands.

After this warning, he closed his eyes; he apparently had no intention of getting up.

Trevena gave a slightly rolling nod of assent.

"You're right," he concurred.

Hewlett stirred and half-raised himself.

Then, suddenly lazy, he turned over on his stomach, kicked his heels in air and, with head hanging over the edge of the divan, contemplated the glass on the floor beside him.

"When I say *three*," he admonished, "we must call Burr; he'll see to us."

"Yes, Burr'll see to us," agreed Trevena.

"One, two!" Hewlett paused. "One, two-o-o-o," he continued. "This is as bad as getting up in the morning. One, two-o-o-o—"

But Burr entered at this point without being summoned.

Trevena and Hewlett, obedient and weary, got to their feet. Trevena lost his balance. The other caught him,

just in time, at the sacrifice of his own elaborately adjusted equilibrium, and landed with a thud on the divan.

Poor Burr had his hands full, but he at last brought things to a triumphant conclusion. His two charges, rosy and spotless, rallied to each other's side, walked in all ease downstairs, and climbed with success into the motor at the curb.

"Oh, I say," Hewlett examined the clock that hung in front of him. "We're altogether too early for Agatha's party. We'll have to kill a little time, Tommy. Any club will do. We shan't meet a decent soul, no matter where we go; everybody's primping now for dear Aggie."

They stopped at the nearest club and found a convivial band assembled. Although Mrs. Carter had not favored these souls with invitations to her dinner, they were extremely cordial to Trevena. Hewlett, for this one night quite willing to be merely his friend's satellite, joined with the other lusty bachelors in toasting and jollying the groom-to-be. It was all very boisterous, not to say noisy.

Willoughby soon found that his quiet, sly pleasantries were wasted in the tumult around him; he therefore smiled condescendingly, grimaced now and then in Trevena's direction (just to let Tommy know these fellows tickled his aristocratic soul) and proceeded to shout things as obvious as any his companions delivered. He was just intoxicated enough to be delighted with hubbub.

Trevena, on his side, was jubilant. This delicious haze around him, through which he seemed to spin smoothly, was no end comforting. Warm gratitude towards the roisterers surged over him; he drank everything in sight because he had an idea it would please the chaps.

At last Willoughby made up to him; it was almost, thought Trevena, as if old Hewlett were swimming through the heavy atmosphere.

"Tommy," shouted Willoughby above the din, "it's nine-thirty. Do you hear?"



—nine-thirty. Too late for Aggie's."

Trevena staggered and came up against the wall with a thud. His intelligence, like a keen wind, cut for a moment the fumes inside his head.

"Good God!" he cried.

"We've got to do—" he frowned and deliberated with intensity — "something."

"Yes, but what?" Hewlett seemed unable to cope with the problem. "Can we ring up Aggie?"

"No, no." Trevena groped about in the darkness closing in on his brain. "It's too late—to tell—Aggie."

He rolled his head from side to side against the wall. The headlong whirl through space was beginning to get on his nerves.

For a time the two were silent, while their bibulous friends still went on toasting them.

"There's just one thing to do." Hewlett grasped Trevena's arm and proceeded to stammer out a plan; but his companion, deafened by the pound of blood in his ears, heard only a word here and there:

"Rooms—get us out of it—done it before."

His head continued its rolling motion; he was too fagged to attempt a question.

"How about it?" Hewlett urged.

Trevena sagged slightly by way of assent.

All at once a wave of blackness swept across his eyes. The next thing he knew, he was lying on his back somewhere and holding up a glass quite nonchalantly. He saw Willoughby stumble towards him, catch his foot against a chair and collapse resignedly.

Trevena sat up in bewilderment. Again the rifted blackness! He felt himself falling, gathering breakneck impetus as he hurtled down, down—He began to shout in terror; there was a sound of shattered glass—

Trevena woke with a start. John Fenwick was leaning over him, shaking him savagely by the shoulders. Tommy's intelligence stirred at the moment when a vicious pain stabbed at his eyes.

He stared about him. He noticed a broken glass, an overturned decanter. Why, damn it, he was on the floor! And there was Sargent's portrait of old Mrs. Fenwick contemplating him frivolously from the wall. Trevena indulged in a wry smile and an unintelligible mutter. Fenwick, a melancholy expression of disgust on his face, continued his mauling and tugging for some time.

"Now get up!" he commanded at length.

Trevena, like a little boy about to be whipped, obeyed. Fenwick guided him to a bed-chamber, helped him to get out of his clothes, and disappeared.

On the way back to his disordered den, John opened a door and looked into another bed-chamber; there lay Willoughby Hewlett, deep in slumber and smiling much as rosy cherubs smile.

## CHAPTER IV

THE wedding, at high noon, was brilliant. St. Thomas's had never held a more fashionable throng. Gossip was rife before the dignified ceremony began; the story of the night before was spreading and filling the church not less effectively than the odour of the roses and the triumphant bursts of the organ.

"Poor John Fenwick was on the hunt the entire night, you know, and the wretches were in his apartment all the time," confided one matron to another.

"But why, in Heaven's name, did they choose John's place? Of all the anti-climaxes to a real spree, my dear!"

"Willoughby got his addresses mixed." So went the pretty whisper behind a prayer-book elsewhere in the saintly edifice. "He expected—well you can guess what Willoughby expected." A subdued sound of laughter. "And they were so far gone they *couldn't* get out."

"Poor Willoughby! But I am glad for Tommy's sake." A note of genuine sympathy here. "It would have been terrible for the poor boy—that."

A beautiful creature strewn with



pearls had the true version of the escapade:

"They wanted John to get them out of the scrape—not showing up at Agatha's, you know—and to make up some tale the Montagues would swallow. But of course it never occurred to John to go home; and there was poor Willoughby alone with Tommy and John's whiskey."

"They'd given up the search and John dashed back to his rooms for a nap; I don't think he got it!" interpolated a man.

One thing mystified everybody.

"How in the world has Willoughby managed to sleep it off and to achieve that wonderful colour and to get the story going—all in four hours?"

That was the way someone voiced the general amazement.

"Willoughby can do anything—except what's decent," explained a heavenly blonde.

A gentle stir at the entrance!

The bride had arrived.

People smiled and shook their heads wisely. It did not occur to anyone to wonder at Charmian for going through with the business. It would have been absurd to break it off; Tommy Trevena was a dear—he would make an ideal husband for any girl.

Charmian, very pale in her superb gown, moved slowly through the hush to the altar.

At first, upon reaching Trevena's side, she stood quite still, her head lowered. She delivered the words required of her with perfect precision and distinctness; not once did she look at Trevena. Several times, however, her eyes met those of the radiant Hewlett.

Then, with a subdued whisper of garments, Charmian knelt beside her husband. At last she raised her head and looked full into his haggard face. She took the measure of his beseeching repentance, of his anguished self-abasement. A tender smile suddenly played over her lips; she had forgiven him everything. Love and intense pity flooded her.

With difficulty she kept back the

tears of mingled happiness and gentle, solicitous melancholy.

## CHAPTER V

CHARMIAN, during her stately progress to the altar, was unhappy. The dumb despair in her mother's face, thrust ludicrously in at the door of the sitting-room, had made the girl turn from the telephone that morning with a message of comfort.

"Don't mind what I've just told Agatha," she had said. "Of course, dear, I'm going to marry Tommy—if he's ever found."

Mrs. Montague had burst into noisy sobs:

"Oh, my darling! You don't deserve this; *you*, the sweetest child in the world!"

Charmian had soothed her mother, patting the heaving shoulders, and dabbing at the rivulets of tears.

"There, there, old silly. Now, you mustn't have red eyes."

So preparations had gone on quietly; the news of Trevena's capture found the Montagues ready. Charmian had striven to give her laugh just the right tone of triumph; but she had felt in her heart a weary protest, a sense of wanton self-sacrifice, of desecration.

Then, kneeling beside Trevena, she had forgotten all this. A happiness so complete as to send a thrill of faintness through her was Charmian's when she left the altar with her husband.

The weeks that followed were of a radiance unparalleled in the lives of Charmian and Trevena. The conventional honeymoon—even the word *honeymoon*—antagonized these two. They refused to consider a lazy, itinerant month in a private car; a gay jaunt over the crowded continent of Europe did not appeal to them.

After all, it was a critical period; they realized that. There were difficult problems to be threshed out during the long days; it was downright unhealthy, so they reasoned, to sit about with nothing to do but brood. Fresh air, sunshine and vigorous activity should fill



the days. They therefore made with all speed for Trevena's camp in the Adirondacks. They tramped for long hours at each other's side, controlling their strides and their thoughts to a rhythmic beat. Runs on horse-back set their pulses to bounding in harmony. Everything, in fact, helped in the conscious adjustment of one being to another's needs.

Charmian, the matron, responding with enthusiasm to the necessity for an enlarged mental horizon, urged her husband on to discreet confessions of what his past had been—"what *you* took me out of," was his way of putting it. He was just frank enough in his disclosures; an unsuspected soundness of judgment and appreciation of delicacy were evidenced in the tales he told.

Charmian's attitude was by no means one of curiosity. She did not relish the anecdotes; somehow, this was quite different from the gossip she was accustomed to.

Of course, she could not help being amused and delighted at times; some of the things he recounted were extremely droll. For the most part, however, the motive of both Charmian and Trevena was to clear away all possible past scores. They were very earnest; they were even, for all their sophistication, naïve.

One morning, as they swung together over the rough road, Trevena seemed strangely ill at ease. He scowled a good deal and shot furtive, quizzical glances at Charmian; the stick he carried wrought havoc among the young leaves that bordered the path.

At last he blurted out:

"I say, Charmian, do you remember that year I was gone on Phyllis Parker?"

Charmian shook her head. "Why, no. Phyllis was married before I came out. I hadn't begun to follow your career then. Her wedding was a great event—the first time I wore my hair up."

"I was damned silly over Phyllis. Do you know—" he could grin sheep-

ishly at the recollection—"I almost shot myself that day."

Charmian stared, wide-eyed, at him. "You cared—so much?"

She was silent for a moment.

Then, with a shrug at the banality of what she said:

"I suppose it took you fully a week to get over it."

"It took me two years." He shook his head in solemn candour. "Why, would you believe it, I used to think *you* didn't compare with Phyllis. I'm tellin' you this just to show what an ass I was, y'know. It wasn't till about a year ago I began to see you were much more rippin' than her."

He was clumsy; but the adoring smile he flashed timidly at Charmian reassured her.

"But I'm certainly *not* more wonderful than Phyllis." Charmian half closed her eyes to call up the image of her rival. "She is prettier and sweeter and better than I. She was too good for you, Tommy."

"Of course she was," he admitted, "but so are you. You're too good for any man."

"Nonsense!" Charmian was firm. "In many ways I'm low—as low as you are." She laughed. "You and I may hit it off; you and Phyllis—never."

"She had *no* use for me. And Willoughby, y'know — oh, Willoughby shocked her no end."

He still peered with anxious eyes into Charmian's face.

"Phyllis is a prig!" he announced.

"You say that because she did the just thing, because she hurt you by being upright. You are unfair."

"No, I swear she's a sniffin' prig," he protested. "I haven't any patience with her type, I tell you. I fell for her because she was pretty, that's all."

"And why, pray, did you fall for me?" Charmian confronted him sharply. "Because I was pretty or because I didn't expect a man to be decent?"

She broke off, confused.

Without realizing it, Charmian had been judging herself while she talked.



She had set herself up beside the righteous Phyllis and had winced in presence of the other's purity. She was cheapened, her rival exalted. Somehow, this harmless anecdote hurt more than all the accounts of chorus-girl mistresses that had gone before.

She was sorry directly she had struck out.

"I don't mean that, Tommy," she remarked. "But it is easy to pick up what you say. You blunder so."

Trevena laughed out a hearty acknowledgment.

"I'm damned glad I told you, anyhow," he said. "Now I've got a clean slate. Funny, isn't it?—I dreaded speakin' to you about her."

"I wonder," ruminated Charmian, dropping Phyllis for the moment, "whether many married people spend their first weeks confessing things. Just suppose I hadn't been able to forgive you; think how miserable we should have been. Why didn't you tell over your sins while I still had a chance to back out?"

"Oh, come, Charmian." Trevena faced her. "You knew about me long ago. You knew I was no innocent kid."

She gave him a shrewd smile. "It was because I knew you *were* an innocent 'kid' that I married you. You are guileless."

One of her shoe-laces had come untied and was whipping about her leg as she walked. She paused and thrust out her foot in Trevena's direction. While he stooped and went to work at the little boot with his great hands, Charmian brushed his forehead with her lips.

"I hate your Phyllis," she told him. "She was a fiend to treat you so abominably."

"I'm jolly thankful to her for turnin' me down," he said.

"Ah, so am I," she agreed. "But *why* did the wretch have the refusal of you? That I can't forgive her."

Trevena had by this fashioned a neat bow. He got up, grasped her hand and they strode off again in silence.

## CHAPTER VI

THE summer at Trevena's place on Long Island was a happy one. Charmian and her husband made a merry pair; their union seemed less a marriage than a boisterous companionship. It was a misfortune that Charmian should be so vigorous, that she should take everything at the man's side and as his equal; she by no means realized this, however.

Had she been physically fragile, Trevena would have responded to the need in her of protection and delicate handling; but the wiry agility she boasted made her perfectly self-reliant. Indeed, Trevena's headaches constituted the only pangs the summer brought forth.

Charmian, with an enthusiasm that delighted her and tickled her husband, shared everything with him. The tendency in Trevena to be expansively vulgar and Rabelaisian at first was kept under control by him; but before long, the temptation to cause the girl a blush now and then was not to be withstood. He was rewarded beautifully.

Poor Charmian, thinking it silly to be so easily shocked, determined on a bolder front. The result was an ever-increasing license on Trevena's part and an acceptance from Charmian that grew to what must have struck the man as positive relish. At last she became frightened and desperately ashamed; but it was too late then to convince Trevena of her sincere desire to recapture some of the old, fine reticence. The general tone of things had been pitched for good and all.

Submitting anew, Charmian in short order found to her despair that her response had even a touch of eagerness. She had begun to like coarseness.

Trevena, like many men who have led a free and easy life, needed a wife whom he could reverence, who should have no point of resemblance with the unconscionable wantons that had contributed to his former exploits. Charmian, as he had believed intensely, was the sort to create an atmosphere of charming reserve and to be always the



creature of delicacy and purity. This would have been her true medium; but, by the conscious effort to share frankly all things with him, she had forced herself out of her natural development and had taken from him the right to worship repentant at her shrine. Charmian had made the fatal error of lowering herself to the plane of her husband's past enthusiasms.

For the most part, things went beautifully. They devoted every minute to each other. Trevena's estate was a big one and answered all needs. There was a substantial stretch of wood, through which a broad walk wound with a final dip straight to the water's edge. A bath-house nestled in the belt of trees that bordered the secluded beach. It was quite perfect here for swimming. Far out bobbed the little float. Jutting headlands guarded the place and lent a romantic privacy to it. Interlaced branches had the effect of filtering the sun's beams. The water was of deepest blue checkered with gold.

In this spot Charmian and Trevena spent a good part of the mornings. It was a rather furtive, sylvan solitude they enjoyed. Trevena strode and splashed about untrammelled by a bathing-suit. This thrilled them both and added just the proper tang of paganism.

The stables were full of fine beasts. Charmian loved to show off for her husband's benefit her knowledge of horses and her glibness in sporting lore. She was not very well grounded; her frequent blunders on the subject of studs and all the rest of it delighted Trevena. He had for years been a keen judge of horseflesh and a successful exhibitor at shows. He took his wife in hand, brushed her up as it were, and, finding her an apt pupil, soon had her out of the rudimentary stages.

She drove his teams prettily and in general qualified as a competent "mistress of the horse"—this a title Charmian early took as her right. They had many an uproarious afternoon in the tan-bark ring. Her slender wrists were like steel before the end of the sum-

mer; they could control with flexible power the liveliest pair of stallions to be found.

The Trevenas neglected their friends deliberately and appeared in civilized centers as seldom as possible. There were a few visits to be made, of course; but these were got over with disconcerting speed. Tennis and golf seemed stale and insipid. So did everything that took them away from their irresponsible, rough-and-tumble manner of living. Mrs. Montague pleaded and scolded.

"You will be nothing but tramps in six months," she wrote once. "You will forget your manners, of course. I'm surprised Thomas isn't letting his beard grow yet. And, Charmian, dearest, don't get in the habit of leaving off your corsets."

"I say," remarked Trevena one evening, after a prodigious yawn, "isn't it great about my drinkin'? I certainly have got it down to a system—isn't that so? And my headaches aren't bad any more. I tell *you*, it was goin' without it altogether that gave me such damned headaches."

Charmian indulged in a dainty counterpart of her husband's yawn and accompanied it with a luxurious stretch.

"It's splendid," she agreed.

"Still—" and she straightened, throwing off her sleepiness, "I don't know. Sometimes I think it's wrong to drink as you do. You get away with a good deal—now don't you, Tommy?"

"Oh, rot!" He was not disconcerted. "I could tell if it was hurtin' me."

"Perhaps." Charmian frowned, watching him pour himself a drink. "But father always said the man who did it steadily was worse than the man who went on sprees and then between times took nothing. And I don't think your headaches are a bit less severe."

Trevena grinned and stopped the argument in his usual way with a hearty kiss.

The Piping Rock Show in September found the Trevenas on the scene. A string of their best horses was entered. It was Charmian's initiation into the



free and easy set that graces a ring. She was distinctly thrilled by it all. The feverish rush behind scenes was stimulating. It was so jolly to sit, straight and quivering, reins in hand and a pair of champing, foam-flecked beasts in front of her, to hear the nervous snorts and to wait for the moment when the groom should let go the bridles and race to safety on the box behind her, to see the gates swing open before her and finally to sweep into the lists.

Charmian loved the sound of leathern girths straining, the muffled beat of hoofs, the rush of air as her team forged ahead and sent the tan-bark flying about the ears of the loungers at the rail. The sense of peril, of power over the plunging animals, the realization of the fierce challenge to her slight strength the horses flung at her—all this set her heart pounding violently. The admiration of the spectators fascinated her, too. She wore the daintiest, most cloud-like frocks she possessed. It was like striding the blast, careering through space, guiding triumphantly the chariot of the Sun.

Charmian on her first appearance had been so unstrung by her daring fleetness that she almost lost control of things. Wheeling around the ring at a high clip, she had heard through the confused tramping and din a clang of metal, then another clatter.

The phaeton gave a slight jolt and she shot a terrified glance to the rear. She had knocked down two of the slender posts set up to mark the inner barrier of the course; one of the posts had fallen between the spokes of her rear wheel and was making a spiteful racket.

The groom leaped down, got the thing disentangled and sprang back to position. Charmian had communicated her uncertainty through the reins to her horses. They broke step; one of them reared and kicked while they still sped around the ring.

The phaeton was deflected from its course and girded against the fence. People jumped back from the rail.

Charmian was on the point of crying out in terror when there came a sudden pause in the tumult. Her team had halted, the competent groom at their heads. Everything was all right.

Charmian, noticing to her chagrin that the pair behind had swung out and passed her, felt her courage return in a rush. She signalled the groom to let go and started again, this time with angry confidence. There were no more mishaps; but poor Charmian left the scene at the conclusion of the class without a ribbon of any sort to her credit. She clenched her teeth and determined to win out at any cost on her next appearance.

Before the end of that afternoon she had a blue ribbon and two reds in her possession.

Charmian's box held a gay crowd at all times. Most of the people were new to her. Conservative Newport was the summer gathering place of her friends. This conspicuously bright and noisy throng rather bewildered her and caused her unwonted fits of shyness at first. Eager and cordial as she was, however, she soon had struck the proper stride. After that, it was very exhilarating.

Charmian at times felt a pang; she knew how Mrs. Montague deplored this racing set and the "horsey talk." Indeed, Charmian had received that very morning a long letter of reproof and exhortation from her mother.

"You know," asserted the lady, "that I heartily disapprove of the sort of thing horse shows stand for. It's all right, of course, to have your box and to be on hands as an *onlooker*. That I advise; at least, I advise it for the Newport show, where one is with one's friends. That makes all the difference between a social function and a promiscuous brawl. But I thought when you married Thomas you would make him give up exhibiting. It isn't right—it's dangerous, Charmian dear—to let him keep up this gadding about to horse shows. He has been alone in the world for fifteen years, remember. You *must* learn to understand how a



wife should act. Above all, don't drive for him; you know I think that vulgar. And *don't* let queer people get into your box. You can be firm and polite about such things and nobody will feel injured."

Charmian knew the letter by heart. She had pondered over the high message it contained and had been unable to hush completely the clarion-call of her conscience. She even shivered a bit when she looked at Mrs. Paradise, who sat beside her, shouting effusions and breathing out alcoholic fumes. Queer people! "Disreputable people," would have been Mrs. Montague's term had she looked in on her daughter's guests.

Trevena had explained things to Charmian. He had protested that "the bunch was all right, just a bit rough, perhaps — nothin' to worry about, y'know."

Of course a show wasn't a Sunday School convention, he hastened to add. The bunch wouldn't expect to hit up any lasting friendship with Charmian; they were the type to realize she would draw the line somewhere. They wouldn't expect invitations to the Trevena country-place. On a devil-may-care occasion of this sort, however, they were not to be snubbed. Take Gwen Ditson, for instance—a good sport in her way, even though she *was* a professional.

"You mustn't treat her like a groom, dear, just because she rides my saddle horses," Trevena had warned.

Charmian, with considerable asperity, had let him know she would be quite able to act graciously to people of that class, without sacrificing one jot of matronly dignity.

There were moments when Charmian was extremely uneasy and not a little resentful. Somehow, she felt that her husband ought not to have brought her within range of the questionable crew. He had been beyond doubt guilty of a breach of chivalry.

Trevena, on his side, suffered from misgivings; but, damn it all, wasn't Charmian clever enough to see how

difficult it would be to keep out of things? She had revelled in the prospect of driving; he hadn't by any means proposed the lark.

Still, he couldn't for all his self-communings consider himself quite innocent. Perhaps he was vaguely aware that in the few months of his married life he had kicked the pedestal from under Charmian. The frank good-fellowship of her as an equal was charming, to be sure; and the sense of desecration was pretty well deadened by the vividness of the relation. Still, Trevena ever and again found himself worrying and fretting.

The exhibitors' dinner went off like the pop of a champagne cork. Trevena got as drunk as the others and at the end of the festive banquet was in no condition to go home. On the pressing invitation of Willoughby Hewlett, he finished out the night at the Paradise establishment. Mr. Paradise voiced an enthusiastic welcome; Willoughby's inimitable wink answered for the hostess's readiness to receive any friend of his under her roof.

Charmian, arriving at Piping Rock in a motor for the last day of the Horse Show, found that her husband had accepted the Paradise hospitality for another night—for her as well as for himself.

She started an indignant protest, but noticing in a flash that Trevena was in a condition of racked befuddlement, she decided to accept the inevitable.

"Oh, another thing!" Trevena had announced. "There's some sort of fool bazaar tomorrow. I said you'd help—at a booth, y'know."

"Very well," said Charmian. "But after this, please don't make plans for me without letting me know."

The afternoon left her with nerves frayed. It was the day of tandem and four-in-hand classes. Trevena drove his horses on both occasions and fared badly. The tandem got into a sorry mix-up once right in front of the Trevena box; Tommy cursed audibly and laughed out an apology for his clumsiness to the gallery. No sooner had that



difficulty been straightened than he narrowly escaped running down one of the ring attendants. It took the spectators, a shrewd crowd, but a few moments to get the significance of Trevena's unwonted blunders; "Tommy Trevena's bleary," ran the rumor.

Charmian heard a gay interchange on the subject when she was pushing her way out through the throng to the team that awaited her for the next class. It was a championship affair and she lost out from sheer nervousness. Later, during the four-in-hand exhibition, she with difficulty kept herself from trembling. It went surprisingly well, however; Trevena seemed alert and masterful. The precise pounding of his horses' feet never wavered from the true beat; the smooth jingle of trap-pings inspired confidence. Trevena got his blue ribbon. The polite acclamations over, he thundered through the gate at a smart trot.

Charmian was just sinking back with relief in her chair when she saw her husband impatiently whip a hand to his aching head. One of the horses missed its footing and swerved. The four-in-hand lurched. The shout the scurrying bystanders emitted sent a numbing chill through her. Willoughby Hewlett, who was in the Trevena box, gave a subdued exclamation.

Faint and very white, Charmian got up.

With a decisive gesture, she beckoned Willoughby to follow her; then, apparently quite calm, she hurried to the gate.

Trevena was kneeling in the midst of the pushing, eager crowd. A man lay stretched on the ground.

Charmian put a hand to her clamorous heart; there was blood on the white fence.

"Is the guy dead?" asked a tense, inquisitive voice.

"Sure!" came a delighted response.

The man had been kicked in the head by one of the horses. Despite the cocksure information vouchsafed by his companion at the rail, he was not dead.

"A fractured skull—dangerous but

not necessarily fatal," was the doctor's verdict.

Charmian and Willoughby offered deft aid; Trevena, bewildered and horror-stricken, was helpless and rather a hindrance. He was soon led away.

After the injured man had been shipped on a stretcher to the hospital, Willoughby turned to Charmian. The deadly seriousness with which he had taken it all and the enthusiastic service he had tendered, caused him now a reaction of positive shame. He should have been less bowled over, he thought; a few irrepressible jests would have saved his cynical skin—so he reasoned.

"'Pon my word," he remarked to Charmian, "we're lucky. The fellows around here seem to know the chap. They say he's all alone in the world—no family of any kind. I never believed it possible to find such a case; knock a man down and at once a wife and ten children are about your ears. That's the usual thing, isn't it? It was decent of the man not to have connections, don't you think?"

Charmian nodded. She knew quite well Willoughby didn't mean a word of this chaff. She slipped a hand through the crook of his arm and together they walked away.

The show was still going on. Charmian heard the whir of wheels, the patter of hoofs in the enclosure. Over the fence, horses' heads and flushed riders rushed past. The boxes, a blur of colour, might have been a vast flower-bed. A bugle blew, summoning the next class.

All at once, Charmian reeled; great weights seemed tied to her knees, dragging her down. With a little cry, she stumbled and fell before Willoughby could catch her.

## CHAPTER VII

CHARMIAN got through dinner that night very well. The Paradise guests adopted a subdued tone at first. The accident was touched on with a delicacy that was most impressive, the hostess considered.



"At the show two years ago my husband brought a man down. A compound fracture of the leg, wasn't it, Henry?" Mrs. Paradise was deliberately vague as to details; she seemed to be pointing the usualness of the occurrence.

"I believe it was," concurred Paradise, with a reflective nod.

"He recovered in a short time—really remarkable," went on the lady.

"They all do; you can't kill them." This from Paradise was a bit tactless.

"People shouldn't be allowed to crowd the gates; accidents are simply unavoidable." Mrs. Paradise followed it through.

"It isn't *right*," said Hewlett. "The fellows are always dashing around under the horses' hoofs. There should be more policemen to look after things."

Charmian, after a polite affirmative, let the subject drop.

"I am so sorry you didn't exhibit this year," she told Mrs. Paradise. "I remember the triumphant career of Lady Gay Spanker; how she did run away with things at Newport!"

That lightened the tone somewhat. The painful duty of condolence over, everybody rallied. Well-bred gaiety came to the fore and the dinner wound up in merriment. Trevena alone failed to do his part; he was obviously miserable and moody and kept a footman busy filling his glass.

Charmian early confessed to fatigue and went to bed. In her room she cried a little; her maid petted and comforted her to no purpose.

Lying back at last among the pillows, Charmian, with closed eyes, sighed.

"Tell my husband I am asleep, if he enquires," she warned. "I don't want to see anyone."

She did not sleep, however. A confused uproar floated in through the open windows. A string orchestra was strumming; the merrymaking, tempered to a pleasant babble by the hush of the night air, was rather soothing.

Charmian stared up into the darkness and quivered with sobs. She had never before given way to such desper-

ate discouragement. The peril of Trevena's weakness confronted her and inspired absolute terror. She felt helpless and unhappy. It was not that she was torturing herself with questions or tiring her brain with endless problems that could not be solved. She did not think at all. She simply lay there and trembled. There was a dull, unreasoning passivity in her attitude. She was the abject victim of fear—that was all. The hours dragged on. She did not even hear the climacteric din from the ballroom. The music kept up its unflagging vivacity; the tide of mirth was persistent in its flow. Charmian was unconscious of any noise. She wept and was afraid. She did not know why.

In the morning, long before the erstwhile revellers had so much as turned over in their beds, Charmian had her motor brought around. Half an hour later she was at the hospital.

The injured man was still unconscious, but the nurses expressed most hearty assurances of his improvement. Charmian was gracious and firm. She would like to see the man, she said; when the attendants hesitated, she insisted that she *must* see him. Bending over the bed, she examined with intense scrutiny the face of the sufferer; the distortion of the features had taken on an inflexible, frozen rigidity.

Charmian could not repress a shudder; it seemed to her impossible that a countenance so locked in an expression of anguish could ever relax. All the while, the nurse at her elbow whispered encouragement. The doctor was delighted with the man's condition, she asserted.

Charmian, when she had returned to the Paradise house, unlocked the door between her bedchamber and her husband's; in his darkened room she hesitated a moment before rousing him. As she looked down at Trevena, she saw with startling distinctness the face of the injured man. Trevena lay on his back, his head twisted slightly to one side. There was a bold grace to the curve of the powerful neck; the



tendons and muscles were rooted firmly in the hollow above the collar-bone.

Charmian thought with a pang of the warped and ropy sinews in the other man's skinny neck. Trevena's mouth was shut, but with an easy immobility. He was still flushed with drink. The dishevelled black locks, the sprouting beard and the comfortable relaxation of the arms flung above his head gave him the appearance of insolence and sensuality.

Charmian shook him vigorously.

For a time he remained oblivious to mauling; at last, however, there was a quiver under his closed lids. Then his eyes opened. He yawned, swore sleepily, and, perceiving Charmian, sat up.

She stepped back in time to avoid his boisterous hug.

"I want to talk seriously," she announced. "I have just come from the hospital. I saw the man. They say he is improving, but it's not true."

She shivered as Trevena gave another bewildered yawn.

"I saw the man," she repeated, "and I know he is dying. He is dying—oh—I haven't a doubt of it."

All the terror of the night came back in an overwhelming rush and she began to sob hysterically.

Trevena sprang out of bed. He took her in his arms and kissed her.

"Don't be such a baby, dear," he protested. "Of course they know better than you; the doctor can tell how the chap is. You're fagged, Charmian dear; just stop worrying. It will be all right. Forget it."

"Forget it!" she cried, furious. "I can't take a thing like this lightly. I'm not able to think, 'Well, it was the man's fault, anyhow,' and then go and get drunk and be happy. You are brutal and selfish. You don't understand me, because I have pity, because I should never forgive myself if he died. Ah, you should be *ashamed!*"

She broke away from him and rushed back to her own room. The door slammed to behind her and she locked it with a vicious turn of the key.

At luncheon, Mrs. Paradise beamed

upon the assembled company. Some of the people gathered about her were inclined to be grumpy and sarcastic; heads were still heavy after the dance. Not so Mrs. Paradise's. She had that morning been heroic; naturally the remembrance of her altruism fascinated her.

"I just dashed over to the hospital myself," she announced in the loudest voice she could command.

Realizing that everybody had not heard, she waited for a lull before she went at it again.

"I dashed over myself this morning to the hospital," she once more cried. "The man is doing beautifully. He had almost regained consciousness when I left. A fortnight will see him on his feet again. It was such a relief to hear it; I really cried I was so delighted."

"You are very kind," said Charmian.

She had by this time gained control of herself. A bulletin had come every hour over the wire—"A steady gain," she was told and was at last won into believing what the surgeon said.

The thought of her silly tirade at Trevena's expense had caused her a vague feeling of guilt; she came down to luncheon determined on conciliating him.

He had given her a sheepish smile and she had responded with pretty timidity. She had stiffened, however, at the unmistakable sway in his gait.

Motors were already snorting at the door before the ices were served. There was a general rush up the stairs for the purpose of a last surrender to maids; for, of course, the costume one wears at a charity bazaar must be impeccable, else sales might suffer. Nobody buys lavishly from a woman whose rouge has been applied with unseemly haste.

The waiting automobiles were allowed to snort out their impatience for a good half hour before the occupants of the guest-chambers saw fit to sally forth to the encounter. Mrs. Paradise paced the entrance hall and despatched footmen on the unavailing errand of knocking at doors; she herself sent



plaintive cries at intervals up the stairwell.

The fête had begun hours ago, she complained to the empty air; they would be late, late, so late. The guests responded when the sense of their own achieved perfection moved them.

Lawn fêtes for multifarious institutions were at this period in their young prime; people still loved them and found in them the zest of novelty. No resort boasted more than two or three such affairs a season; it is only in the last half dozen years that bazaars have flaunted welcoming pennons before the passerby several times a week. To have one's estate chosen for the gala event used to be a privilege one sought. Indeed, Mrs. Paradise on this day nursed a considerable grievance; her lawn had been passed over by the Bazaar Committee in favor of a greensward quite ill-tended by comparison. Still, since personal pride must be swallowed on an occasion where the public weal alone is considered, Mrs. Paradise had consented to construct, equip and manage the Dairy at this particular fête.

This Dairy was destined for popularity, once the inner workings became known. The little edifice was charming and spotless. The rusticity of it was probably not authentic; but that did not matter. At dainty tables under a trellis the Paradise guests served creamery products. The buttermilk was voted delicious, as was the cheese. There never was seen a lovelier set of milkmaids than those of Mrs. Paradise's choosing. Even the Petit Trianon knew not such costumes.

"Be sure to wear white—pannier effect if possible," Mrs. Paradise had commanded.

The result may well be imagined. The menials at the Dairy floated about in creations for all the world like puffs of summer cloud. The beauty of the waitresses and their gowns would in itself have been enough to draw crowds to the pretty, secluded spot. But there was still another attraction, known only to the select few, and yet a source of

revenue far more substantial than buttermilk could bring.

Behind a white door marked *PRI-VATE* in blue letters was a room where the churns and things were kept. Throughout the long afternoon shouts of mirth could be heard from this sanctum; evidently the labor of whipping butter into shape was not irksome to the staff Mrs. Paradise had collected.

Strings of hilarious men kept strolling through the latticed lunchroom; a series of strange taps never failed to produce an effect. The door would swing open; shouts of welcome from the mysterious interior would assail the ears of the unelect buttermilk sippers. Then the door would shut with a slam. When the men reappeared, they were always more boisterous than they had been on entering. They were apt to bump against tables and jog the sharp elbows of spinsters indulging in ice-cream or rustic beverages. One school teacher who had come a long distance at the call of charity was so jostled that she spilled buttermilk down the front of her waist, thereby ruining that precious garment.

If the truth be told, the fair women who served as milkmaids in the lunchroom became barmaids once they passed the threshold of the door marked *PRI-VATE*. Champagne flowed within more freely than milk. Had the news of the "speak-easy" ever leaked out, execration from all sides would have been the order of the day. As it was, the rector of the church that had been sponsor for the fête took occasion on the following Sunday to signal out for special commendation the Dairy and to remark on the astounding sums raised therein.

It was indeed festive in the "Fiz-zery," as it was jocosely termed, and Charmian could not help having a beautiful time. She mixed drinks until her arms ached; she wheedled big sums out of people; she learned to "jolly" like the best of them. Willoughby Hewlett acted as a sort of major-domo. He consumed prodigious amounts, but without the slightest let-up in his ab-



surd prattle. Through a hole in the white door he kept surveying the lunch-room; his comments on the demure patrons were very racy.

"I say," he whispered once, "there's a dear old girl out there—she's simply glued on this orb of mine. There! I winked at the darling, I did." He chuckled. "Up she gets, I swear. She's leaving, and her ice-cream not half eaten! Oh, I am sorry."

Trevena, too, was very sportive. Charmian had relented and he gamboled about delightedly under her indulgent gaze. The prices he paid for drinks soon set people to gasping.

"Don't let Tommy out," protested Hewlett. "No lady parishioner would be safe; and, above all, we must have decorum. No, don't let Tommy loose."

Six o'clock found the haunters of the speak-easy with empty pockets. Willoughby called for a search.

"Not one penny leaves this room," he shouted. "Every man get in line; we don't trust you."

Trevena started for the door in haste. He was at once seized. There was a hot scramble; at the end of it, Trevena tumbled to the floor. Pinned down by his indignant friends, he struggled and protested while the hunt went on. With a cry of horror, Willoughby extracted a hundred-dollar bill from somewhere. Mrs. Paradise led the resultant merriment much in the fashion of cheerleader.

At that moment a footman from the Paradise house pushed open the door.

Charmian caught his expression of anxiety.

She went over to him.

"Madame," he announced, very low, "the doctor has telephoned. He says the man is dead—unlooked-for complications, I believe."

Charmian gave her husband a swiftly appraising glance. He had got up and, with a rueful smile, was brushing the straw from his coat.

"Well, damn you," he was saying, "that's good for another bottle, isn't it? You've got to give a man his money's worth, y'know."

He staggered as he spoke.

Charmian turned once more to the footman. "Tell Mrs. Paradise I have been called away."

She opened the door and went out.

## CHAPTER VIII

CHARMIAN reached home at ten o'clock that night. She had settled everything at the hospital. Then, guessing that the fête would be over, she had returned to the Paradise house.

Mrs. Paradise met her with wild protestations of sympathy and sorrow; it was almost like professional ululation.

Charmian hastened to calm her hostess and to point out that her grief over the man's demise was really not poignant.

"But you must stay the night," pleaded Mrs. Paradise.

"Thank you so much. I am sorry; it is impossible." Charmian's tone showed she was not open to persuasion.

"I have called for my husband," she said with a distant smile.

Mrs. Paradise cast up her eyes.

"Poor Thomas was prostrated," she hastened to explain. "The news horrified him."

"Yes, of course." Charmian quite understood. "I have the motor waiting."

"But, the poor dear is in bed," wailed Mrs. Paradise. "The shock, you know; it was really too much for him."

"Ah, then I shan't disturb him," said Charmian. "He is probably asleep by now."

"I do hope so," cried Mrs. Paradise. "I believe he has drunk too much in the last three days just because he couldn't bear to think of this."

Charmian did not attempt to keep the topic going. "You will tell him, won't you please—if he wakes—that I have gone home. There is a great deal to be done, you see."

"Oh, I know." Mrs. Paradise could find something in her past to meet any emergency. "I once ran over a man in my motor. It was so tragic—he died, of course. Yes, there are many things



one feels it one's duty to see about."

Charmian submitted to a maternal kiss and retreated with all speed.

The vast, silent rooms of the Trevena house were distinctly soothing after the rococo Paradise interior. Charmian was very tired; in her own bed at last, she was soon fast asleep. Trevena's absence was a relief; she did not want to see him. Her dreams were haunted by the vision of the man in the hospital cot and by the contrasting picture of her husband, lying on his back, insolent and flushed.

Trevena showed up at noon; Charmian had not expected him before luncheon time. He was pale and obviously wretched. The coolness of her greeting was not lost on him. He did not attempt to take her into his arms. She sat, very stiff, in a chair by the library window; uneasy at her calm scrutiny, he paced up and down.

"I swear, Charmian, it fairly finished me," he urged. "I know anybody but an ass would have seen how things were goin'; I was a fool. And when they told me, I was all played out; I was drunk, of course,—I admit it. When a chap's like that, he don't pull himself together, y'know. I didn't realize it all till this mornin'. I wouldn't have let them get me to bed—and all that—if I'd been able to help myself. I tell you, Charmian, I could have cut my throat this mornin'. You havin' to go through all those dirty arrangements last night! No wonder you hold it against me; I don't expect anything else."

"Why should I have anything to hold against you?" Charmian wanted to know. "I've got quite as much to be sorry for as you. I acted like a *fool* at the bazaar—didn't I? I was having as good a time as the rest. We are all to blame—that's the point."

Trevena dropped into a chair; confused, he ran a hand through his hair, then pressed the fingers tight over his closed lids.

"Don't talk about bein' to blame yourself," he scoffed. "That's rot. Be-

cause a man's on the loose and kills another man, his wife's not at fault, y'know."

He opened his eyes and looked at her with intensity.

"Besides, you don't mean it," he said abruptly. "You sit there and talk and all the time you're condemnin' me. Well, that's right; I don't ask to be excused. Only come out with it; be honest. It'll do me no good if you talk truck like that. I know what I've done; you *ought* to light out at me. Go ahead. I can stand it. But afterwards—well, I know you'll see how it is; and I *need* your sympathy, Charmian. But if you keep up this high-and-mighty self-accusation and this martyred air, I won't listen. It's hypocritical and unfair, that's what it is. You'll never help me that way; and you want to help me—you *must* want to help me."

The clumsy pleading had a boyish note of helplessness. He leaned forward, eager and passionately contrite. Charmian caught in his blundering words the justifiable complaint he voiced. The attitude of cold aloofness she had adopted would make for bitter misunderstanding; better the flare of hot anger and the true reconciliation that would follow.

Charmian, with steady eyes, contemplated her husband for a moment. His tremulous expectancy awoke the pity in her and the longing to protect. There was no flicker of anger left.

Charmian, on her knees beside Trevena's chair, drew his hot face down and covered it with kisses. Feeling his arms about her, she burst into happy tears.

The next day brought back much of the old free-and-easy companionship. The morning was hot and the Trevenas early sought the cool waters of their secluded beach. Tommy, exulting in his swarthy nakedness, frolicked in the waves to his heart's content, swimming far out at top speed, plunging off the float with all the fantastic and distorted convolutions of the "fancy" diver, and whipping up geysers of foam from



sheer exuberance of spirits. His shouts were infantile, gleeful.

Charmian responded in a quiet, off-hand fashion. One would have said their merriment had all its former zest. For that matter, Trevena's had. Charmian, on the other hand, felt a restraint upon her. She could not help fearing that her husband had, with characteristic carelessness, quite forgotten the mishap of three days ago.

After luncheon Trevena exclaimed: "I say, how about a motorboat run?"

"I'm afraid it will be too late, after the funeral." Charmian watched him narrowly as she spoke.

He caught himself up with a quick flush.

Then,

"Do y'think so?" he asked. "A couple of hours before dinner, y'know. We can make it, I'm sure."

It was obvious that he *had* forgotten.

Charmian sighed.

"A couple of hours before dinner? Perhaps," she said.

## CHAPTER IX

WHEN the Trevenas opened their New York house late in November, they had entered upon a new phase of their married life. The autumn months on Long Island had wrought the change. The morning swims had been abandoned in September; and Charmian's eager interest in the stables had died out abruptly after the Piping Rock catastrophe. Charmian had learned that by her speedy forgiveness she had played into her husband's hands. He had glimpsed her dependence on him. The death of the injured man had after all grieved him only in so far as it alienated Charmian from him.

With her sudden veer to unreasoning tenderness had come the knowledge of the power he possessed. The old understanding as of equals had disappeared. The days no longer went with a rush; rather, they took on a monotonous hue. Trevena grew restless. Charmian, finding it impossible to fill the hours with new interests that should

satisfy her husband, became unhappy. Petty irritations sprang up. Each knew the other bored and was resentful. Even at breakfast conversation had a feeble tentativeness.

Then, with the hue and cry of the hunting season filling the clear air, things brightened of a sudden. Early in October, the Trevenas accepted an invitation to a promiscuous house-party. Charmian, who had been trained to consider such gatherings vulgar, yet responded without hesitation to the project.

After that, time once more sped headlong under the brilliant fall skies. All Long Island seemed to spend the days on horseback. The brightstained trees resounded with shouts and the yelping of packs drunk with blood. Gun-shots from the deepest hollows gave evidence that each solitude was peopled. Scarlet coats flashed on all sides, like the plumage of some new species of bird that had migrated to the autumnal woods. Crowds of weary hunters could be seen at nightfall entering every house on the Island. It was a season of hilarity and good-fellowship. The air, already with the nip of frost in it, was stinging everybody to an exuberant activity.

October and November found the Trevenas in the midst of the throng that trooped from one woodland stretch to the next, from one blazing hearth to another. Informality and jollity reigned. The England of Robin Hood's time is born again each year with the first chilly days of October. The Lincoln green has turned to scarlet, that is all. The hunting-horn sounds its clarion note from hill and valley. Estates keep open house; hospitality knows no limit.

The Trevenas became definitely identified during those weeks with the hunting set. The "horsy" crowd that Mrs. Montague abhorred found a place in the noisy, boisterous throng; for the most part, however, the house-parties were made up of a better sort. The people were often questionable, of course; still, they were usually good



stock, no matter how much run to seed. They were the fast element that yet is still received by the conservatives at big affairs; most of them were not very distantly related to the reactionaries. The Woodcocks, for example, were typical: Mrs. Woodcock's father was a diplomat of note, a man who stood for the best, whose elder daughter was the wife of an English duke; Woodcock himself boasted parents of intolerable aristocracy. And yet this couple of high lineage afforded the newspapers lively headlines; they were notorious. So it went; and so the Trevenas were in short order classed.

Charmian soon had put all scruples to rest. She had an unconscionably good time. The long, bracing rides over the hard ground, the fleet progress across fields and ditches and high fences exhilarated her. The gay dinners were delightful. There was a thrill of adventure in playing cards for high stakes; winning money, losing money—it did not matter, the sport was capital. The people she met might not be unfailingly estimable, but they could at least be counted on to furnish amusement. Even the fact that Trevena drank more and more as the autumn advanced failed to worry Charmian as it should have; for all the other men imbibed to the top of their bent and were none the worse for it.

The week before the Trevenas' New York season began, Charmian paid her mother a visit. The Montagues had always made a point of spending a peaceful October and November at Newport.

In previous years, Charmian had loved the brief respite from social activity; on this occasion, however, she was uneasy at the end of two days. Perhaps the constant exhortations and lectures her mother saw fit to administer had something to do with this altogether unprecedented discontent.

Whatever the cause, Charmian was bored. The days seemed endless, the formal dinners depressing. She longed for her husband; never had she known such loneliness and homesickness. Try

as she might, Charmian could not conceal her unrest.

Mrs. Montague and Irene were quick to perceive the change and were at no pains to hide how much they were hurt; Mr. Montague, when he was approached on the subject, staunchly refused to believe such tommyrot.

Poor Charmian protested again and again that she was enjoying the rest, that she would like to stay on indefinitely. The other women were by no means hoodwinked. Charmian, in the desperate effort to restrain the annoyance the situation inspired, smoked so many cigarettes that she became a scandal to the entire household.

"No girl should have more than five cigarettes a day," scolded Mrs. Montague. "Excess of any sort is deplorable."

"Everybody says Gwen Harcourt takes drugs, just because she smokes all the time," supplied Irene.

"Well, how do you know *I* don't?" snapped Charmian and burst into angry tears.

The day Charmian left for New York, she was utterly miserable. All the old love for her people flooded her heart. By a strange perversity, she thought of New York and her husband with dread; she wanted to stay where she was, to win her parents and Irene back to their former unwavering allegiance. The old talks they had had years before after Agatha's marriage came back to her.

"People say things are never the same when a girl's married—certainly Agatha has changed; but I will *always* be the same," Charmian had often asserted.

She looked now with tragic eyes at her mother and glimpsed the pain beneath the older woman's pompous hostility.

"Mother dear, forgive me, forgive me!" cried Charmian and tumbled into Mrs. Montague's arms. "I have been horrid this week—I don't know why. I'll never be like this again."

That caused everybody to relent. The day progressed smoothly and brightly. Charmian's wretchedness melted into



thin air; she waxed merry at the prospect of New York and Trevena.

The whole family saw her off at the Wickford Boat. A protracted embrace over, Mrs. Montague felt a polemical stir within her.

"Charmian dear," she said, enormous and sententious, "remember, you must spend all your time, before we get back to town, eradicating these people you have been running about with. A man must expect, when he marries, to have his wife choose his friends for him; a woman who neglects old bonds and takes up with her husband's undesirable companions establishes a fatal precedent."

She had dealt the newly established understanding a death blow.

"You're forgetting that I go with these people for just *one* reason," said Charmian. "That is, because I like them. Thomas has nothing to do with it. He doesn't force anybody on me—he is too kind."

Her eyes were blinded with tears that were the fruit of bewildered unhappiness.

Once in Trevena's arms, Charmian was content. She gazed deep in his kind eyes, stroked his expansive forehead and sighed.

"How I have missed you!" she murmured. "I have been miserable without you. Has the poor head ached?"

"Not a bit," he assured her.

"Ah, I am so glad. I've thought of you suffering, with nobody to soothe the pain away."

In her room, Charmian slipped off her travelling clothes and put on a dressing-gown.

Trevena watched with adoration the competent way in which she coiled her hair into a loose, sculpturesque knot.

"I sent Annie to bed," she explained. "The poor thing is always car-sick."

"How are your people?" Trevena liked this reunion gossip.

Charmian had risen from the dressing-table. She hesitated for a moment, then, feeling a tide of resentment within her, she said:

"They are not the same. Somehow,

they have changed. Dear, I am *alone* in the world—except for you. You are all I have."

He caught her in his arms. "And you are all I have; you are all I want, all I need in the world."

Charmian smiled.

"You are all I need," she echoed.

## CHAPTER X

THE winter progressed smoothly enough. The Trevenas joined forces with their friends of the hunting season and went at top speed. Charmian, in a month's time, had found herself a true member of the restless band. The activities communicated something of the elation and excitement that she had felt so often when managing her husband's horses. She responded with ardour to the gayety; any cessation or lull irked.

Charmian gained in assurance during this period. All her timidity departed and she acquired much of the cool, wise self-reliance of the other women.

Trevena was still for his wife an all-sorbing study. She loved him with a new intensity and she grew to understand him. His drinking had become a habit; he was seldom intoxicated now and never quite sober.

Charmian saw at last the indisputable failure of her married life. Trevena was faithful to her, would probably remain so; but she had come to stand in his eyes for a woman whose standards were his own. Instead of lifting him clear of the old associations, she had showed a zest for the questionable.

Charmian, if the truth be told, had been but too obviously adaptable. Marriage had not meant a cutting away from the past; it had resolved itself into a neophyte's training on the time-worn lines. Charmian knew this. She resented the rough-and-tumble treatment her husband often indulged in; but, before she had been roused to anger, it was too late to mend matters. She could only accept things as they stood and weep miserably in secret.

Trevena and Willoughby Hewlett were inseparable. Willoughby, rosy



and ridiculous as ever, amused Charmian; he had this winter a new pose with women—an air of guileless innocence. He even called himself “the silly sheep.”

Charmian, misled once into believing him serious, talked to him of her husband and openly acknowledged her uneasiness. Willoughby, his radiant smile in check, listened with perfect earnestness and offered dignified condolence. That very night he and Trevena positively raised the roof at somebody's dance.

From John Fenwick alone did Charmian gain real sympathy. Trevena's upright, estimable cousin was, of course, never on hand for the gay parties of the winter; but he made a point of dropping in to tea whenever Charmian would receive him alone. He treated her with chivalrous respect; he pitied her and would not believe that she was happy in this new set she went about with.

Fenwick adored Charmian. He did not take it upon himself to lecture or scold; he simply sat in her drawing-room and let her talk to him. These brief sessions soothed her. They were not mere boring intervals between frolics. They were occasions where she could pour out her troubles and discuss her husband with the only other person in the world who loved and understood him.

Nothing of especial import occurred during the winter or spring. The season in New York ran its breathless course; then, during Lent, activities were transferred to Palm Beach. June found the Trevenas where they had been in December, so far as their relation to each other was concerned.

The irreparable break occurred in the summer. It did not come about in the conventional way; Tommy was guilty of no intrigue. The Trevenas were at the Long Island estate once more. Charmian was to have a child early in September; throughout July and August she was ill and unhappy. The unwonted quiet acted as a goad to her nerves; the exaggerated solicitude of

everybody was infuriating. She had never known sickness before. Her condition bewildered her.

The estate adjoining Trevena's was open that summer; the Leverings occupied it after a three years' absence abroad. Mrs. Levering was the Phyllis Parker of Trevena's youth. She was charming and fragile, with something of the brightness of a canary on a swinging perch. Her delicacy was instantly apparent to an observer; she herself, however, did her utmost to conceal the fact that she was not well. Her costumes were always diaphanous and gayly coloured, like a rosy mist.

Willoughby Hewlett struck it to perfection when he characterized her thus: “Look at the dear prig and you're wafted straight to Japan in cherry-blossom season.” Phyllis refused to wear anything but chiffons that would catch the tints of dawn or crêpes that would seem a suffusion of young bloom. Above these wondrous clouds, her face lost much of its natural wanness. Her hat was sure to be big and very limp and of the deepest pink. Only her gaiety and her husband's love and her clothes kept Phyllis alive, people said.

She did not let a day go by without running in on Charmian. She would sit for hours in the dim drawing-room and chatter like an irrepressible child; then, of a sudden, would come a droop of weariness and, after a kiss and a merry, tired laugh, she would be gone.

Phyllis was not clever but her babble was unquenchably refreshing. There was an elfin beauty about her, too, an ethereal radiance ever and again glowing through her pallor. She was “incandescent,”—thus Willoughby again—“a fairy bulb that flashes on and off while you watch.” Other women suffered by juxtaposition with her. Charmian often confessed to herself that she felt like a swarthy savage beside the unearthly creature.

Charmian had a desperate fondness for Phyllis, and yet these lively visits held the most trying moments of the summer. Trevena, drawn from remote corners of the estate by the sound of



rippling laughter, always put in a sheepish appearance. Phyllis was at once cordial and distant with him. Directly he had entered the room, she would for a moment become shy, incoherent, as if he had thrown an impeding stone into the tenuous stream of her conversation; then, the barrier overcome, the sparkling flow would go on again smoothly.

Trevena would sit in charmed silence until she had gone; then, a bit apologetic, he would become extravagantly attentive to Charmian.

Phyllis purposely kept to topics that would be of interest to Charmian alone. "Charmian dear, I shall bring my sister and her babies to see you, when they arrive. They are exquisite little things, the babies. Robert is a ruffian, dirty and all the rest of it. He spends his time hunting fat worms and rushing with the finest specimens into the drawing-room. He usually gets scared at unfortunate moments and drops them into Louis Quinze chairs or tea-caddies. You see, I warn you now what to expect. The little girl is very dainty; she becomes hysterical at sight of Robert's big game. They are a problem, of course. It gets a bit tedious after the third or fourth worm has been dropped."

Phyllis chattered on like this and Charmian would bite her lip in anger to see Trevena's breathless interest.

All the man's former worship had returned in a flood. Phyllis, ineffably lovely and exalted, inspired the votary's awe. Charmian saw herself for what she was—the misshapen vessel, not any better after all than the women that had been in Trevena's life before; she knew now what she had forfeited in her marriage. Her husband, silent and abased before Phyllis, was unable to keep from his face the hopeless ecstasy of the sinner prostrate beneath the shrine of his adoration. Charmian's dull misery was complete.

In August the Leverings hastened to Arizona. Phyllis had failed steadily during the summer. Trevena, saddened and tormented by worry, strove to ease his fears by communicating them to

Charmian. Then her jealousy flared. There was a bitter scene. From that moment she kept herself icily aloof.

The crisis came without warning.

Charmian, one morning late in August, was moving slowly towards the library, when a stab of pain went through her. She reached the library door. Trevena was sitting near the window, a newspaper in his hand. Charmian struggled to cry out. It seemed to her that she had screamed; in reality she had not uttered a sound.

Then, through the chill mist closing in on her, she saw that her husband was sobbing, his mouth stretched taut, his face at once hideous and grotesque under the goad of grief. In a flash Charmian knew Phyllis had died.

As she crouched in the doorway, Trevena got up. She thought he looked straight at her; then he turned his back and strode out of the room onto the terrace.

Charmian moaned low her tragic disillusion. Had he not heard her cry of anguish? Had he not seen the suffering in her face? She swayed and fell.

Late that night, Trevena returned home, mud-stained and very drunk. He was informed at the door that his wife's baby had been born and had lived but three hours.

## CHAPTER XI

CHARMIAN never forgave her husband, never for an instant believed that he had failed to see her crouching in the doorway. For two years she continued to live with him. There were many reconciliations of a perfunctory sort; a second child was born to them; but in the end their life together became unbearable. Trevena, sick of his wife at last, broke away. With Hewlett he went in for spectacular dissipation; but, unlike his disreputable friend, he made no attempt to keep his head bobbing serenely above the bright billows. Poor Trevena was quite submerged, while Willoughby still made his shining countenance necessary to society.

Rumours of divorce were of course



persistent. The fact that the Trevenas lived apart seemed sufficient justification for the conjecture. Every move of Charmian's was supposed to be on the advice of some lawyer. If she settled in a place for a month or two people talked of her establishing a residence.

As a matter of fact, Charmian was occupied merely with extravagant entertaining and with the care of her baby son. Unhappy she was and bitterly hostile to her husband; but somehow she could not bring herself to the point of breaking the link that bound her legally to Trevena.

She knew that he was out of her life irrevocably; and yet, with a perverse, undying love for him in her heart, she clung to the unmeaning tie of marriage. Thomas Trevena, Jr., was the one radiant thing Charmian had left. Social activities afforded her restlessness full play; she soon found that she could not give them up.

When little Tommy had reached the dignified age of three, Charmian took to inspecting exclusive schools. This pursuit brought her to Newport one September; St. George's was there to be reckoned with. At the Muenchinger-King, the windows of the Trevena suite gave a view of the Reading Room veranda across the way. Charmian knew that her husband had a house in Newport; she was sure he would show up at the Reading Room before the morning was over. Two hours she spent in savage self-accusation and irresolution; at last she gave in and, drawing a chair into a secluded spot where she could watch the scene on the porch opposite, she sat down and waited.

She was not disappointed. Trevena drove up in a motor and joined the lazily convivial crew. His hearty laugh floated up to his wife from time to time. He was as handsome as ever and quite unchanged. Charmian, examining him in miserable solitude, saw at once that his head was aching. Unperceived by his companions, he would throw back his head and press hard on his closed lids.

Charmian's eyes blinked through a

mist of tears. She turned away, furious with herself. Ten minutes later she came stealthily back to the window. Trevena had gone.

In the afternoon, St. George's was viewed from top to bottom with a critical eye. Willoughby Hewlett, dropping in at the Muenchinger-King after luncheon, had consented to look the school over with Charmian.

"If I approve of the place, it won't be fit for the child," he had warned. "Another thing, I refuse to join you if there are nurses along."

Charmian reassured him. "I am quite alone. The baby and his retinue are safe in New York."

The visit of inspection over, Charmian and Hewlett, chatting and arguing gaily, sped back along Purgatory Road. Near the boundary of Easton's Beach, another automobile, evidently returning from the Clambake Club, shot past them; Trevena was alone in the machine. He glanced back over his shoulder and recognized his wife. Drunk, confused, and at the same time stung to frenzy by the maddening throb of his head, he put up a hand to his eyes. Fifty feet ahead, a wooden bridge spanned a creek. Trevena, giving way to momentary bewilderment, had lost control of himself; he sent the motor forward, with a leap, into a dizzying speed. Clouds of dust eddied about him; the engine snorted out its fierce power.

Straight for the bridge Trevena made; then, apparently blind and panic-stricken, with a savage twist of the wheel he wrenched the machine out of its course. Just as it reached the rattling planks, the automobile swung around, and, skidding crazily, plunged at the flimsy rail to one side of the bridge. There came the dull thud of the impact, the sharp crack of splintering wood and the big car toppled, reared and crashed over the edge. A spurt of water shot high into the air. A mad whirring of wheels sounded. A plank from the rail fell with a faint slap into the water.

Charmian sat still, paralysed and



shuddering. The chauffeur had brought her motor to a stop. Hewlett, unseen by her, had leaped from his place and rushed down the road through the swirling dust-clouds.

Screaming out incoherent entreaties, he had stumbled after Trevena.

Now, mute with horror, his body sagging, he stared at the shattered bridge-rail, then back to Charmian. She caught on his white face a dazed grief.

A hand to her throat, Charmian fell forward.

## CHAPTER XII

CHARMIAN'S period of mourning rather amused people; but, after all, when one thought of it dispassionately one couldn't help approving. The conventional thing could not, in this case, be avoided. There had been no divorce; there was the child to be considered, too; and, most cogent of reasons, Mrs. Trevena's widow's-weeds were very becoming. Crêpe afforded a perfect background for her black eyes, her clear pallor and her amazingly red lips.

Charmian, at Trevena's death, had put her affairs into the hands of John Fenwick. For two months she had been ill; a nervous collapse, it was politely called. As a matter of fact, it was complete prostration.

Through the weeks, she was haunted not by the remembrance of the crash itself, but by the vision of Trevena with a hand to his eyes. It was that little familiar gesture that called up all her old-time pity and solicitude and brought the keen pang of tender association. In her delirium she was always murmuring consolation and pressing her slender hands to her husband's forehead.

With recovery had returned the former restlessness; grief-stricken though she was, Charmian longed for social activity once more. Her son, at the very noisiest age, was too energetic for comfort; nobody's nerves could stand a protracted session with him.

Charmian found that travel alone satisfied her. Leaving Tommy behind, she spent two years in skimming over the surface of the earth. No place held

her for long. She simply wandered about aimlessly and exhausted the servants she carried about with her.

"It's two years now since I've got my breath," complained Annie, the maid.

At last, Charmian left off her mourning; with the resumption of colorful gowns, the nomadic career ended. She came back to New York and to Society. In short order, she had made herself a leader of the gayest set to be found. Her dinners and dances got tremendous headlines in the papers; the Montagues, long since hostile, threw up their hands at such unheard-of vulgarity.

John Fenwick, neglecting everything else in his determined effort to increase the Trevena estate, had a feverish time of it; Charmian's extravagance would have drained almost any exchequer.

Still, John continued patient; the remonstrances he made were gentle. His adoration of Charmian had waxed with the years; even now he could not believe that she gained any happiness from her spectacular career. She *must* crave rest, the haven of peace—of that he was sure.

Fenwick saw less and less of her as time went on. Even on occasions of business it was hard to pin her down for more than a hasty interview. Tea with her alone became increasingly difficult of achievement. Willoughby Hewlett, the buffoon par excellence of New York, kept at her side. Fenwick could not help liking the dissipated, good-looking Hewlett, with his endless chatter and his rosy insouciance; but the proximity of the wag to Charmian pained him. She was too fine to be followed about by such scamps, he told himself again and again.

Fenwick's health broke down during Charmian's second season in New York. Three months abroad the doctors ordered; and John, after intense deliberation, gave in to the command. He realized that he owed it to Charmian's fortune to keep fit and alert.

He had tea with her the day before he sailed.

"I have two long hours free," she confided to him.



Charmian, slimmer than ever and with a new note of abrupt decisiveness in her voice, gave Fenwick a cordial smile as she sat at the tea-table.

"John, you are a wonderful creature," she told him. "I am so terribly selfish; it's nothing in the world but my silly extravagance that has pulled you down. I promise you this—from now on I am going to be more careful. I owe it to you."

"By no means," he protested. "It isn't that. It isn't the management of your affairs, Charmian—" He caught himself up.

Charmian was silent for a moment.

"What is the matter then?" she asked at last. Her eyes had grown tender.

John, overwhelmed by hopeless longing, by loneliness, plunged.

"Ah, Charmian, it is you. I love you; I can't be happy until I've got you out of this frivolity. I need you for my own. Can't you see that you aren't meant for this, that you are meant for something—better?"

There was, despite the words, no egotism in what he said.

Charmian echoed his earnestness.

"No, no," she answered him, "you don't understand. You are too good for me; I shouldn't be satisfied with anything but this. It requires a person of intelligence—your life of peace. I could never learn to be content away from a crowd."

He shook his head.

"That isn't true," he contradicted. "I have studied you and I *know*."

Charmian brightened of a sudden.

"It may be so," she said. "After all, I have never tried."

She leaned towards him. "Let me think it over these three months. When you come back I shall be able to tell you my decision; I will thresh it all out. Somehow, I *hope* you are right; there is nobody in the world so fine as you. Ah, if only you are right!"

She dropped the discussion there.

For an hour they talked. Once, after a pause of some length, Charmian left the room for a moment. Returning,

she gave the man a long glance of guilty tenderness.

Fenwick, serious and thoughtful, felt Charmian must prefer this quiet relaxation to the incessant babble of Hewlett and the other fops.

A footman entered. "The hairdresser, Madame!"

Charmian rose with a murmured apology.

"Oh, I am so sorry," she exclaimed. "I had forgotten the wretch. And we have had only an hour's talk!"

Fenwick, departing, gazed with hopeful timidity into her eyes.

"Remember!" he urged. "Three months to think it over."

"Three months!" she assured.

When he had gone, she paced up and down the room impatiently.

Catching her reflection in a mirror, she paused.

"You fool! You worthless fool!" she said aloud, and with bitterness, to her image.

## CHAPTER XIII

FENWICK returned to New York in a sanguine frame of mind; on the way from the steamer to his rooms, he stopped in at the Union Club. Geoffrey Carter, by a lucky chance, was there.

Fenwick, after a very brief preliminary chat, asked tidings of Charmian.

"Oh, good Lord, haven't you heard?" Carter exclaimed. "She's taken Willoughby Hewlett unto herself—for better or worse, till death do them part and all the rest of it. It's the joke of New York. The thing should have come off last Wednesday, but Willoughby was too drunk to move; on Thursday he couldn't even be *found*. He showed up again, pink as you please, on Friday and they got the ceremony off their minds at noon. Charmian's an idiot."

As Fenwick turned away, Carter delivered a parting shot:

"You'll certainly have your hands full now, John, furnishing Charmian with funds. She and Willoughby are going in for exhibiting horses—an expensive hobby, that. I *don't* envy you."



# The Chronology of a Bore

By Ford Douglas

7:00 a.m. Wakes.  
7:01 a.m. Kicks wife on shins.  
7:02 a.m. Tells her a long-winded dream he had.  
7:03 a.m. Gets out of bed and knocks over a chair, waking family in apartment below.  
7:05 a.m. Takes a bath and is proud of it.  
7:20 a.m. At breakfast is reminded of an anecdote which his wife has heard twelve thousands times. Overrules protest and tells it anyhow.  
7:45 a.m. Reads aloud to wife the draft of the League of Nations.<sup>1</sup>  
8:30 a.m. Boards street car for downtown. Grabs end seat.  
8:35 a.m. Recognizes acquaintance, gets up, crowds into acquaintance's seat and proceeds to tell him of his safety razor—when purchased, date and price of same, how used, etc., etc.  
8:42 a.m. Acquaintance gets off car and waits for following one.  
9:00 a.m. Arrives at office.  
9:01 a.m. Tells stenographer the long-winded dream.  
9:18 a.m. Stenographer takes a 5-grain shot of bromides.  
9:19 a.m. Tells bookkeeper the long-winded dream.  
9:20 a.m. Bookkeeper goes out for a drink.  
9:30 a.m. Tells office boy what he thinks of the League of Nations.  
9:31 a.m. Office boy applauds, and asks off for the ball game. (Request granted.)  
10:30 a.m. Calls up friend (who has

an automobile and suggests an afternoon of golf.

10:31 a.m. Confused, friend weakly agrees—curses self for an hour.

12:00 m. Hurries to a *caféteria*. Apologizes to seven acquaintances in same for his presence, explaining that he usually lunches at the Astorhof.

12:15 p.m. Emerges from *caféteria* wearing toothpick jauntily.

12:16 p.m. Stops at haberdashery and buys a couple of silk shirts, ordering monograms stitched on sleeves of same.<sup>2</sup>

12:29 p.m. Looks in jewelry store window and resolves to buy another diamond ring.

12:35 p.m. Arrives at office and tells bookkeeper why he can't eat fish.<sup>3</sup>

12:55 p.m. Bookkeeper looks over advertisements in search of a new job.

12:59 p.m. Signs letters.

1:01 p.m. Relates to stenographer three puns that he read in the morning paper, also a number of retorts of Pat to Mike of an older vintage.

1:17 p.m. Leaves office.

1:18 p.m. Office force rebel and talk of forming a soviet.

1:23 p.m. Arrives at friend's office and catches him just as he is leaving. Friend offers a weak excuse about important business, but is talked out of it.

1:32 p.m. Looks at friend's car and suggests he ought to get a new one.

1:35 p.m. Remarks on the wonderful summer weather this year.

<sup>1</sup>"The League of Nations bids fair to succeed Free Silver as an irritant among the mentally deficient—the latter having put over 23,000 in the various asylums of this country."—Report of the Nebraska Commission for the Insane.

<sup>2</sup>"Monogrammed shirts, handkerchiefs, pajamas, and other articles of wearing apparel are regarded as significant where paranoia is suspected, and in such cases there should be detention and treatment."—Dr. Abner J. Fosdick, in *The Asylum Journal*.

<sup>3</sup>"It is the best to humor these types rather than risk a violent breaking down of the brain tissues."—Dr. Joshua P. Davis, in *"Idiots and Idiocy."*



1:36 p.m. Friend narrowly escapes hitting a street car and a truck.

1:37 p.m. Tells friends of silk shirt purchase—the price, material, color. Adds that he usually has his shirts made by Rubenstein of Boston.

2:16 p.m. Arrives at golf club, where friend buys a drink—gladly.

2:21 p.m. Quarrels with caddy-master over price of caddies.

2:23 p.m. Rejects four caddies in rapid succession.

2:26 p.m. Borrows three balls and a midiron from friend.

2:29 p.m. Relates the long-winded dream to friend while he is teeing off.

3:07 p.m. Arrives at the ninth hole, sticking friend for a couple of drinks *en route*.

3:42 p.m. Accuses friend of stealing a stroke.

4:12 p.m. Sticks friend for another drink and collects at clubhouse. Offers to shake the box for the next one. On refusal moves over to another table and horns in.

4:16 p.m. Friend denounces him to the bartender.

4:17 p.m. Arranges with a neighbor to ride home in his machine.

4:18 p.m. Buys a drink to clinch same.

4:19 p.m. Introduces himself to the three strange men at the table.

4:20 p.m. Discovers that one of them knows a mutual friend living in Hoboken.

4:21 p.m. Hoboken suggests New York, New York suggests hotels. He involves them in a wrangle as to which is the best.

4:22 p.m. He gives an impressive list of key clerks and headwaiters who turn handsprings when he speaks to them.

4:25 p.m. The neighbor says it's time to start home.

4:26 p.m. He tells the neighbor to go to hell.

4:27 p.m. They all get up and leave him for the veranda.

4:28 p.m. He moves over to another table and volunteers, by way of introduction, to recite "Gunga Dhin." He

is suppressed. He then offers "The Shooting of Dan McGrew."<sup>4</sup> No takers.

4:29 p.m. In desperation he plays his trump: exhibits his new thin-model watch, a hitherto sure-fire hit in any company.

4:30 p.m. They are not interested. So he shows them his tortoise-shell glasses.<sup>5</sup>

4:31 p.m. They yawn and he gets up and leaves them flat.

4:32 p.m. He moves over to the bar and instructs the bartender how to mix a cocktail. Bartender grabs ice-pick and hefts it thoughtfully.

4:35 p.m. He invents a drink and names it after himself.<sup>6</sup>

4:36 p.m. Bartender inquires of waiter the penalty for mayhem.

4:38 p.m. He tries one of his drinks and becomes sick. Rushes for wash-room.

4:39 p.m. Three cheers by bartender and waiters.

4:43 p.m. He reappears, pale and groggy, and prescribes for himself a strange mixture of salt, soda, ammonia, an egg, pepper-sauce and gin, which he tells bartender is a sure cure for nausea. Drinks it—and rushes back to washroom.

4:44 p.m. Unbounded enthusiasm by bartender and waiters.

4:51 p.m. Orders a taxi and goes home.

5:54 p.m. Arrives home and cancels dinner. Blames wife for his condition, claiming the grapefruit at breakfast was rancid and the ice stale.

5:55 p.m. Wife makes a mental inventory of his estate and is hopeful.

<sup>4</sup>"Legislative enactment should be taken at once toward the suppression of public recitation of the works of Kipling and Robert W. Service. 'Gunga Dhin' and 'The Shooting of Dan McGrew' are a menace to the public at large, twelve persons in a New Jersey summer resort audience becoming suddenly insane at the conclusion of a parlor entertainment."—Report of the New Jersey State Board of Health.

<sup>5</sup>"The tortoise shell, or mission style, spectacles were brought out by a bridge carpenter of Matteawan for the asylum trade. They became popular at once and now enjoy a wide vogue among both inmates and their friends and relatives."—*Alienists' Weekly News*.

<sup>6</sup>"Since the success of Col. Rikey in 1888, the invention of new drinks and naming them after themselves has become a mania among the mildly demented."—Dr. P. J. Snodfish, in *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology*.



5:56 p.m. She inquires tenderly if he has neglected to pay his quarterly instalment on his insurance.

5:57 p.m. He goads her about a former sweetheart—now a successful veterinarian,—accusing her of planning a second marriage.

5:58 p.m. She counters by naming a certain stenographer, whereat he grins and tells her that the women just can't leave him alone.

7:30 p.m. After a hearty dinner, she looks in on him. She finds him snoring, so she puts on her hat and goes to the movies.



## Wanton

*By David Morton*

THIS Summer that goes loitering down the Earth,  
 Whose hair has filled the twilight skies with dream,  
 Whose breath surprises blossoms into birth,  
 Whose laughter haunts the stone-impered stream—  
 Has rifled all the crypts the ages know,  
 To deck this briefest carnival of days,  
 With colour that was splendid long ago,  
 And sweetness that was new on ancient ways.

The dust of wearied cities where they lie,  
 Is pillaged for those lovely stones they wore,  
 To make a necklace for this passer-by  
 Whose loveliness was lovely long before,—  
 Whose every rose now flaming at her breast,  
 Can be but ancient lovers, robbed of rest.



NO one ever admires a blonde quite so much as the man who has married a brunette.



THE other woman always profits by the mistakes made by a man's wife.





# The Proposal

*By Eric Paul May*

AT the time it had seemed the most natural thing in the world; now, after cool and careful reflection, he began to realize that he had behaved like a fool.

It had been a dull dinner party the night before: nondescript food and uninteresting people. Uninteresting, that is, save one; and she had sat opposite him.

She was beautiful, of course, with hair of a reddish shade that he thought was natural, and an ivory complexion and vivid red lips that he hoped were Nature's own unaided efforts. Her perfectly fitting gown was of the most expensive order, and from coiffure to slipper everything was in most excellent taste.

He had come across her afterwards on the terrace, and they had sat together talking, watching the rippling reflection of the moon in the lake below.

There was an alluring Something about her which he could not describe; and, in the intoxication of the moment (or was it perhaps his host's good wines?), he had pressed her to him,

kissed her, and told her he loved her passionately. She had submitted shyly to the embrace, then freed herself and ran indoors.

Now he was cursing himself for a fool—he who was as good as engaged already. Poor girl! She had probably taken him seriously and had been living ever since in a fool's paradise. He must withdraw before it was too late, and tactfully make her see that his words had not been meant as a proposal.

He called that afternoon. She had told him the night before where she lived.

He burst into her apartment unannounced and found the red-haired goddess alone drinking tea.

Without any preamble he discharged his unpleasant duty; pouring out a torrent of words as he endeavoured to explain the object of his visit.

When he had finished she laughed softly.

"Have some tea," she said. "My husband will be in presently."



AMAN realizes that the end is near when he can no longer recognize as his own the clever things his wife says at dinner.





# Sanctuary

*By Theodore Dreiser*

## I

PRIMARILY, there were the conditions under which she was brought to fifteen years of age: the crowded, scummy tenements; the narrow green-painted halls with their dim gas-jets, making the entrance look more like that of a morgue than a dwelling-place; the dirty halls and rooms with their green or blue or brown walls painted to save the cost of paper; the bare wooden floors, long since saturated with every type of grease and filth from oleomargarine and suet leaked from cheap fats or meats, to beer and whiskey and tobacco-juice. A little occasional scrubbing by some would-be hygienic tenant was presumed to keep or make clean some of the chambers and halls wherein they lived.

And then the streets outside—any of the streets by which she had ever been surrounded—block upon block of other red, bare, commonplace tenements crowded to the doors with human life, the space before them sped over by noisy, gassy trucks and vehicles of all kinds, generally carrying filth. Streets stifling in summer, dusty and icy in winter; decorated on occasion by stray cats and dogs, dead or alive, pawing in ashcans, watched over by lordly policemen, and always running with people, people, people—who made their living heaven only knows how, and existed in such a manner as their surroundings suggested.

In this atmosphere were always long-shoremen, wagon-drivers, sweepers of floors, washers of dishes, waiters, janitors, workers in laundries, factories—mostly in indifferent or decadent or

despairing conditions. And all of these people existed, in so far as she ever knew, upon that mysterious, evanescent and fluctuating something known as the weekly wage.

Always about her there had been drunkenness, fighting, complaining, sickness or death; the police coming in and arresting one and another; the gas man, the rent man, the furniture man, hammering at doors for their due—and not getting it—in due time the undertaker also arriving amid a great clamor, as though lives were the most precious things imaginable.

It is entirely conceivable that in viewing or in meditating upon an atmosphere such as this, one might conclude that no good could come out of it. What! a dung-heap grow a flower? Exactly, and often, a flower—not to grow to any glorious maturity probably, but nevertheless a flower of the spirit at least might have its beginnings there. And if it shrank or withered in the miasmatic atmosphere—well, conceivably, that might be normal, although in reality all flowers thus embedded in infancy do not so wither. There are flowers and flowers.

Viewing Madeleine Kinsella at the ages of five, seven, eleven and thirteen even, it might have been conceded that she was a flower of sorts—admittedly not a brave, lustrous one of the orchid or gardenia persuasion, but a flower nevertheless. Her charm was of a simpler character, more retiring, less vivid than is usually accorded the compliment of beauty. She was never rosy, never colorful in the high sense, never daring or aggressive. Always, from her infancy up, she seemed to herself



and others to be slipping about the corners and out-of-the-way places of life, avoiding it, staring at it with wide, lamblike eyes, wondering at things, often fearfully.

Her face, always delicately oval and pale, was not of the force which attracted. Her eyes, a milkish blue-grey with a suggestion of black in the iris, her hair black, her hands long-fingered and slim, were not of a type which would appeal to the raw youth of her world. Unconsciously, and ever, her slender, longish body sank into graceful poses. Beside the hard, garish, colorful, strident types of her neighborhoods—the girls whom the boys liked—she was not so much so, not even fascinating, and yet, contemplated at odd moments as she grew, she was appealing enough, at times beautiful.

What most affected her youth and her life was the internal condition of her family, the poverty and general worthlessness of her parents. They were as poor as their poorest neighbors, and quarrelsome, unhappy and mean-spirited into the bargain.

Her father, for instance, came dimly into her understanding at somewhere near her seventh or eighth year as an undersized, contentious and drunken and wordy man, always more or less out of a job, irritated with her mother and her sister and brother, and always, as her mother seemed to think, a little the worse for drink.

"You're a liar! You're a liar! You're a liar! You're a liar!"—how well she remembered this sing-song echoing reiteration of his, in whatever basement or hole they were living at the time!

Her mother, often partially intoxicated or morose because of her own ills, was only too willing to rejoin in kind. Her elder sister and brother, much more agreeable in their way and as much put upon as herself, were always coming in or running out somewhere and staying while the storm lasted; while she, shy and always a little frightened, seemed to look upon it all as unavoidable, possibly even essential.

The world was always so stern, so mysterious, so non-understandable to Madeleine.

Again it might be, and often was, "Here, you, you brat, go an' get me a can o' beer! Gwan, now!" which she did quickly and fearfully enough, running to the nearest wretched corner saloon with the "can" or "growler," her slim little fingers closed tightly over the five-cent piece or dime entrusted to her, her eyes taking in the wonders and joys of the street even as she ran. She was so small at the time that her little arms were unable to reach quite to the level of the bar, and she had to accept the aid of the bartender or some drinker. Then she would patiently wait while one of them teased her as to her size and until the beer was handed down.

Once, and once only, three "bad boys," knowing what she was going for and how wretched and shabby was old Kinsella, not able to revenge himself on anyone outside his family, had seized her en route, forced open her hand and ran away with the dime, leaving her to return fearsomely to her father rubbing her eyes, and to be struck and abused soundly and told to fight—"Blank-blank you, what the blank 're you good for if you can't do that?"

Only the vile language and the defensive soberness of her mother at the time saved her from a worse fate. As for the boys who had stolen the money, they only received curses and awful imprecations, which harmed no one.

Wretched variations of this same existence were endured by the other two members of the family, her brother Frank and her sister Tina.

The former was a slim and nervous youth, given to fits of savage temper like his father and not to be ordered and controlled exactly as his father would have him. At times, as Madeleine recalled, he appeared terribly resentful of the conditions that surrounded him and cursed and swore and even threatened to leave; at other times he was placid enough, at least not inclined to share the dreadful scenes which no one could avoid where her father was.



At the age of twelve or thirteen he secured work in a box-factory somewhere and for a while brought his wages home. But often there was no breakfast or dinner for him, and when his father or mother were deep in their cups or quarreling things were so generally neglected that even where home ties were strong no one of any worldly experience could have endured them, and he ran away.

His mother was always complaining of "the lumbago" and of not being able to get up, even when he and Tina were working and bringing home a portion of their weekly wage or all of it. If she did, it was only to hover over the wretched cookstove and brew herself a little tea and complain as before.

Madeleine had early, in her ignorant and fearsome way, tried to help, but she did not always know how and her mother was either too ill or too disgruntled with life to permit her to assist, had she been able.

As it had been with Frank so it was with Tina, only it came sooner.

When Madeleine was only five Tina was a grown girl of ten, with yellow hair and a pretty, often smiling face, and was already working somewhere—in a candy store—for a dollar and a half a week. Later, when Madeleine was eight and Tina thirteen, the latter had graduated to a button-works and was earning three.

There was something rather admirable and yet disturbing connected dimly with Tina in Madeleine's mind, an atmosphere of rebelliousness and courage which she had never possessed and which she could not have described, lacking as she did a mind that registered the facts of life clearly. She only saw Tina, pretty and strong, coming and going from her ninth to her thirteenth year, refusing to go for beer at her father's order and being cursed for it, even struck at or thrown at by her father, sometimes by her mother, and often standing at the foot of the stairs after work hours or on a Sunday afternoon or evening, looking at the crowded

street or walking up and down with other girls and boys, when her mother wanted her to be doing things in the house—sweeping, washing dishes, making beds—dreary, gray tasks all.

"Fixin' your hair again! Fixin' your hair again! Fixin' your hair again!" she could hear her father screaming whenever she paused before the one cracked mirror to arrange her hair. "Always in front of that blank-blank mirror fixin' her hair! If you don't get away from in front of it I'll throw you an' the mirror in the street! What're you always fixin' your hair for? Say? What're you always fixin' your hair for? Say! What? What? What're you always fixin' your hair for?"

But Tina was never cast down apparently, only silent. At times she sang and walked with an air. She dressed herself as attractively as possible, as if with the few things she had she was attempting to cast off the burden of the life by which she was surrounded. Always she was hiding things away from the others, never wanting them to touch anything of hers. And how she had hated her father as she grew, in bitter moments calling him a "sot" and a "fool."

Tina had never been very obedient, refusing to go to church or to do much of anything about the house. Whenever her father or mother were drinking or fighting she would slip away and stay with some girl in the neighborhood that she knew. And in spite of all this squalor and misery and the fact that they moved often and the food was bad, Tina, once she was twelve or thirteen, always seemed able to achieve an agreeable appearance.

Madeleine often remembered her in a plaid skirt she had got somewhere, which looked beautiful on her, and a little gilt pin which she wore at her neck. And she had a way of doing her yellow hair high on her head, which had stuck in Madeleine's mind perhaps because of her father's rude comments on it.



## II

It is not surprising that Madeleine came to her twelfth and thirteenth years without any real understanding of the great world about her and without any definite knowledge or skill. Her drunken mother was now more or less dependent upon her, her father having died of pneumonia and her brother and sister having disappeared to do for themselves.

Aside from petty beginners' tasks in shops or stores, or assisting her mother at washing or cleaning, there was little that she could do at first. Mrs. Kinsella, actually compelled by the need for rent or food or fuel after a time, would get occasional work in a laundry or kitchen or at scrubbing or window-cleaning, but not for long. The pleasure of drink would soon rob her of that.

At these tasks Madeleine helped until she secured work in a candy factory in her thirteenth year at the wage of three-thirty a week. But even with this little money paid in regularly there was no assurance that her mother would add sufficient to it to provide either food or warmth. Betimes, and when Madeleine was working, her mother cheered her all too obvious sorrows with the bottle, and at nights or week-ends rewarded Madeleine with a gabble which was all the more painful because no material comfort came with it.

The child actually went hungry at times. Usually, after a few drinks, her mother would begin to weep and recite her past ills: a process which reduced her timorous and very sympathetic daughter to complete misery. In sheer desperation the child sought for some new way in her own mind. A reduction in the working-force of the candy factory, putting her back in the ranks of the work-seekers once more, and a neighbor perceiving her wretched state and suggesting that some extra helpers were wanted in a department store at Christmastime, she applied there, but so wretched were her clothes

by now that she was not even considered.

Then a man who had a restaurant in a nearby street gave her mother and Madeleine positions as dishwashers, but he was compelled to discharge her mother, although he wished to retain Madeleine. From this last, however, because of the new and frightening attentions of the cook, she had to flee, and without obtaining a part of the small pittance which was due her. Again, and because in times past she had aided her mother to clean in one place and another, she was able to get a place as servant in a family.

Those who know anything of the life of a domestic know how thoroughly unsatisfactory it is—the leanness, the lack of hope. As a domestic, wherever she was—and she obtained no superior places for the time being—she had only the kitchen for her chief chamber or a cubby-hole under the roof. Here, unless she was working elsewhere in the house or chose to visit her mother occasionally, she was expected to remain. Pots and pans and scrubbing and cleaning and bed-making were her world. If anyone aside from her mother ever wanted to see her (which was rare) he or she could only come into the kitchen, an ugly and by day inconvenient realm.

She had, as she soon came to see, no privileges whatsoever. In the morning she was expected to be up before anyone else, possibly after working late the night before. Breakfast had to be served for others before she herself could eat—what was left. Then came the sweeping and cleaning. In one place which she obtained in her fifteenth year the husband annoyed her so, when his wife was not looking, that she had to leave; in another it was the son. An old uncle boarding with one family frightening her by his importunities and his disagreeable self, drove her to leave it. By now she was becoming more attractive, although by no means beautiful or daring.

But wherever she was and whatever she was doing, she could not help think-



ing of her mother and Tina and Frank and her father, and of the grim necessities and errors and vices which had seemed to dominate them. Neither her brother nor her sister did she ever see again. Her mother, she felt (and this was due to a sensitiveness and a sympathy which she could not possibly overcome), she would have with her for the rest of her days unless, like the others, she chose to run away.

Daily her mother was growing more inadequate and less given to restraint or consideration. As "bad" as she was, Madeleine could not help thinking what a "hard" time she had had. From whatever places she obtained work in these days (and it was not often any more) she was soon discharged, and then she would come inquiring after Madeleine, asking to be permitted to see her. Naturally, her shabby dress and shawl and rag of a hat, as well as her wastrel appearance, were an affront to any well-ordered household. Once in her presence, whenever Madeleine was permitted to see her, she would begin either a cozening or a lachrymose account of her great needs.

"It's out o' oil I am, me dear," or "Wurra, I have no wood" or "bread" or "meat"—never drink. "Ye won't let yer pore old mother go cold or hungry, now, will ye? That's the good girl now. Fifty cents now, if ye have it, me darlin', or a quarter, an' I'll not be troublin' ye soon again. Even a dime, if ye can spare me no more. God'll reward ye. I'll have work o' me own tomorra. That's the good girl now—ye won't let me go away without anything."

Oscillating between shame and sympathy, her daughter would take from the little she had and give it to her, tremulous for fear the disturbing figure would prove her undoing. Then the old woman would go out, lurching sometimes in her cups, and disappear, while an observant fellow-servant was probably seeing and reporting to the mistress, who, of course, did not want her to come there and so told the girl, or, more practical still, discharged her.

Thus from her fourteenth to her sixteenth year she was shunted from house to house and from shop to shop, always in the vain hope that this time her mother might let her alone.

And at the very same time, life, sweetened by the harmonies of youth in the blood, was calling—that exterior life which promised everything because so far it had given nothing. The little simple things of existence, the very ordinary necessities of clothing and ornament, with which the heart of youth and the inherent pride of appearance are gratified, had a value entirely disproportionate to their worth. Yes, already she had turned the age wherein the chemic harmonies in youth begin to sing, thought to thought, color to color, dream to dream. She was being touched by the promise of life itself.

And then, as was natural, love in the guise of youth, a rather sophisticated gallant somewhat above the world in which she was moving, appeared and paid his all but worthless court to her. He was physically charming, the son of a grocer of some means in the vicinity in which she was working, a handsome youth with pink cheeks and light hair and blue eyes, and vanity enough for ten. Because she was shy and yet pretty he became passingly interested in her.

"Oh, I saw you cleaning the windows yesterday," this with a radiant, winning smile; or "You must live down toward Blake Street. I see you going down that way once in a while."

Madeleine acknowledged rather shamefacedly that it was true. That so dashing a boy should be interested in her was too marvelous.

In the evenings, or at any time, it was easy for a youth of his skill and *savoir faire* to pick her out of the bobbing stream of humanity in which she occasionally did errands or visited her mother in her shabby room, and to suggest that he be permitted to call upon her. Or, failing that, because of her mother's shabby quarters and her mother herself, that the following Sunday would be ideal for an outing to one



of those tawdry, noisy beaches to which he liked to go with other boys and girls in a car.

A single trip to Wonderland, a single visit to one of its halls where music sounded in sight of the sea and where he did his best to teach her to dance, a single meal in one of its gaudy, noisy restaurants, a taste of its whirly pleasures, and a new color and fillip were given to hope, a new and seemingly realizable dream of happiness implanted in her young mind. The world was happier than she had thought, or could be made so; not all people fought and screamed at each other. There were such things as tenderness, soft words, sweet words.

But the way of so sophisticated a youth with a maid was brief and direct. His mind was of that order which finds in the freshness of womankind a mere passing delight, something to be deflowered and then put aside. He was a part of a group that secured its happiness in rifling youth, the youth of those whose lives were so dull and bleak that a few words of kindness, a little change of scene, the mere proximity of experience and force such as they had never known, were pay ample for anything which they might give or do.

And of these Madeleine was one.

Never having had anything in her own life, the mere thought of a man so vigorous and handsome, one with knowledge enough to show her more of life than she had ever dreamed of, to take her to places of color and light, to assure her that she was fitted for better things even though they were not immediately forthcoming, was sufficient to cause her to place faith where it was least worthy of being placed. To win his way there was even talk of marriage later on, that love should be generous and have faith—and then—

### III

PLAIN-CLOTHESMAN AMUNDSEN, patrolling like a hawk the region of Fourteenth and K streets, and not so far from Blake, where Madeleine had lived

for a time, was becoming interested some time later in and slightly suspicious of a new face.

For several days, at odd hours, he had seen a girl half-slinking, half-brazening her way through a region the very atmosphere of which was blemishing to virtue. To be sure, he had not yet seen her speak to anyone; nor was there that in her glance or manner which caused him to feel that she might.

Still— With the assurance of his authority and his past skill in trapping many, he followed discreetly, seeing where she went, how she lingered for a while nervously, then returned as she had come. She was very young, not more than seventeen.

He adjusted his tie and collar and decided to attempt his skill.

"Excuse me, Miss. Out for a little stroll? So am I. Mind my walking along with you a little way? Wouldn't like to come and have a drink, would you? I work in an automobile place over here in Grey Street, and I'm just off for the afternoon. Live here in the neighborhood?"

Madeleine surveyed this last stranger with troubled eyes. Since the day her youthful lover had deserted her, and after facing every conceivable type of ill, but never being willing to confess or fall back upon her drunken, dreaming mother for aid, she had tested every device. The necessities and expenses incident to a prospective, and to her degrading state, as well as the continued care of her mother, had compelled her, as she had finally seen it, to come to this—for a time anyhow. A street girl, finding her wandering and crying, had taken her in hand and shown her, after aiding her for weeks, how to make her way.

Her burden that she feared so much was artificially if ruthlessly and criminally disposed of. Then she was shown the way of the streets until she could gain a new foothold in life; only, as she had since learned, it was difficult for her to accommodate herself to this fell traffic. She was not of it spiritually. She really did not intend to



continue in it; it was just a temporary makeshift, born of fear and a dumb despair. So it was that Madeleine was in the public ways.

But neither Detective Amundsen nor the law was ready to believe that. To the former she seemed as worthless as any—one of those curious, uncared-for flowers never understood of the dull.

In a nearby café she had listened to his inquiries, the fact that he had a room in a nearby hotel, or could secure one. Contemning a fate which drove her to such favors, and fully resolved to leave it soon, to make something better of her life in the future, she went with him.

Then came the scarring realization that he was an officer of the law, a cynical, contemptuous hawk, smirking over her tears and her explanations. It was absolutely nothing to him that she was so young and could scarcely have been as hardened as he pretended. She was compelled to walk through the streets with him to the nearest police station, while he nodded to or stopped to explain to passing brothers of the cloth the nature of his latest conquest.

There was the registering of her under the false name that she chose, rather than be exposed under her true one, before a brusque and staring sergeant in shirtsleeves; a cell with a wooden bench, the first she had ever known; a matron who searched her; then a ride somewhere in a closed vehicle, and the usual swift and confusing arraignment before a judge whose glance was seemingly so cold that it was frightening.

"Nellie Fitzpatrick; Officer Amundsen, Eighth Precinct."

The friend who had taught her the ways of the streets had warned her that if caught and arrested it might mean months of incarceration in some institution, the processes or corrective meaning of which she did not quite comprehend. All that she had grasped fully was that it meant a severance from her freedom, the few little things, pitiful as they were, that she could call her own. And now here she was, in the

clutches of the law, and with no one to defend her.

The testimony of the officer was as it had been in hundreds of cases before this; he had been walking his beat and she had accosted him, as usual.

There being no legal alternative, the magistrate had held her for sentence, pending investigation, and the investigation proving, as it only could, that her life would be better were some corrective measures applied to it, she was sent away. She had never had any training worthy the name. Her mother was an irresponsible inebriate. A few months in some institution where she could be taught some trade or craft would be best.

And so it was that for a period of a year she was turned over to the care of the Sisterhood of the Good Shepherd.

#### IV

THE gray and bony walls of that institution starkly dominated one of the barest and most unprepossessing regions of the city. Its northern façade fronted a stoneyard, beyond which were the rocks of the racing Sound and a lighthouse. To the east, rocks and the river, a gray expanse in winter picked over by gulls, mourned over by the horns of endless craft. To the south, bare coal-yards, wagon-yards, tenements.

Twice weekly, sentenced delinquents of various ages—the "children," of whom Madeleine was one; the "girls," ranging from eighteen to thirty; the "women," ranging from thirty to fifty; and the old people, ranging from fifty until the last years of life—were brought here in an all but air-tight cage, boxed like a great circus van, and with only small barred air-holes at the top. Inside the van were bare, hard benches, one against either wall. A representative of the probation and control system of the city, a gaunt female of many years, sat within; also an officer of such prodigious proportions that the mere sight of him might well raise the



inquiry of why so much unnecessary luggage. For amusement in dull hours he smoothed his broad mouth with the back of his red, hairy hand, and dreamed of bygone days.

The institution itself was operated by a Mother Superior and thirty nuns, all of the order mentioned, all expert in their separate ways in cooking, house-keeping, laundering, buying, lace-making, teaching, and a half dozen other practical or applied arts, useful in so varied a realm.

Within the institution were separate wings or sections for each of the four groups before mentioned, sections in which each had their separate working, eating, sleeping and playing rooms. Only one thing was shared in common: the daily, and often twice or thrice daily, religious ceremonies in the great chapel, a lofty, image-decorated and be-altared and candle-lit chamber, whose tall, thin spire surmounted with a cross might easily be seen from many of the chambers in which the different groups worked. There were masses in the mornings, vespers and late prayers in the afternoons, often late prayers at night or on holidays, when additional services of one kind and another were held. To the religious-minded these were of course consoling. To the contrary-minded they became at times a strain.

Always, and over all the work and all the routine relaxations or pleasures of the institution, there hung the grim insistence of the law, its executive arm, upon order, seemliness, and, if not penance, at least a servility of mind which was the equivalent thereof. Let the voices of the nuns be never so soft, their footfalls light, their manners courteous, their ways gentle, persuasive, sympathetic, their mood tender; back of it all lay the shadow of the force which could forthwith return any or all to the rough hands of the police, the stern and not-to-be-evaded dictum of the courts.

This, much more than any look of disappointment or displeasure, if such were ever necessary, spoke to these de-

linquents or victims, whatever their mood, and quieted them in their most rebellious hours. Try as they would, they could not but remember that it was the law that had placed them here and now detained them, whether they would or no. That there was peace, order, sweetness and harmony, was well enough, comforting in cases, only and always it had obviously a two-fold base: one in the power of the law itself, the other in the gentle, appealing, beautiful suasion of the nuns.

But to so inexperienced and as yet unreasoning a child as Madeleine all of it flavored at this time of but one thing: the sharp, crude, inconsiderate and uninquiring forces of law or life, which seemed never to stop and inquire how or why, but only to order how, and that without mercy. Like some frightened animal faced by a terrifying enemy, she had thus far been able to think only of some darksome corner into which she might slip and hide, a hidden place so inconspicuous and minute that the great savage world without would not trouble or care to follow.

And well enough the majority of the Sisterhood, especially those in immediate authority over her, understood the probable direction and ramifications of her present thoughts.

They knew her mood, for had they not during years past dealt with many such? And stern as was the law, they were not unmindful of her welfare. So long as she was willing and obedient there was but one thing more: that somehow her troubled or resentful or congealed and probably cruelly injured mind should be wooed from its blind belief in the essential injustice of life, to be made to see, as they themselves were still ready to believe, that all paths were not closed, all forces essentially dark or evil.

For them there was hope of sorts for all, a way out, and many—even she—might find ways and means of facing life, better possibly than any she had ever known.



## V

SISTER ST. AGNES, for instance, who controlled the spotlessly clean but barn-like and bleak room in which were a hundred machines for the sewing of shirtwaists, was a creature of none too fortunate a history herself.

Returning at the age of eighteen and at the death of her father from a convent in which she had been placed by him in order to escape the atmosphere of a home which he himself had found unsatisfactory, she had found a fashionable mother leading a life of which she could scarcely conceive, let alone accept. The taint, the subterfuge, the self-indulgent waste, had as soon sickened her as had the streets Madeleine.

Disappointed, she felt herself after a time incapable of enduring it and had fled, seeking first to make her way in a world which offered only meagre wages and a barren life to those incapable of enduring its rugged and often shameless devices; later, again wearied of her own trials, she had returned to the convent in which she had been trained and asked to be schooled for service there. Finding the life too simple for a nature grown more rugged, she had asked to be, and had been, transferred to the House of the Good Shepherd, finding for the first time, here in this institution, duties and opportunities which somehow matched her ideals.

And by the same token the Mother Superior of this same institution, Mother St. Bertha, who often came through and inquired into the stories of each one, was of a history and of an order of mind which was not unlike that of Sister St. Agnes, only it had even more of genuine pathos and suffering in it. The daughter of a shoe manufacturer, she had seen her father fail, her mother die of consumption, a favorite brother drink and carouse until he finally fell under the blight of disease and died. Before this, one of his flames, a pathetic figure, having been neglected by him and her family, in fear of exposure had committed suicide.

The subsequent death of her father, to whom she had devoted her years, and the failing of her own dreams of a personal love, had saddened her, and she sought out and was admitted to this order in the hope that she, too, might still make especial use of a life that promised all too little in the world outside.

Her great comfort was in having someone or something to love, the satisfaction of feeling that lives which otherwise might have come to nothing had by some service of hers been lifted to a better state. And in that thought she worked here daily, going about among those incarcerated in the different quarters, seeing to it that their tasks were not too severe, their comforts and hopes, where hope still remained, in no wise betrayed.

But to Madeleine at first the solemn habits of the nuns, as well as the gray gingham apron she had to don, the grayer woolen dress, the severe manner in which she had to dress her hair, her very plain shoes, the fact that she had to rise at six-thirty, attend mass and then breakfast at eight, work from eight-thirty to twelve-thirty, and again from one-thirty to four; lunch regularly at twelve-thirty and sup at six, attend a form of prayer service at four-thirty, play at simple games with her new companions between five and six and again between seven and nine, and then promptly retire to a huge sleeping-ward set with small white iron beds in long rows, and lit, after the retiring bell had sounded, by small oil cups or candles burning faintly before various images, all smacked of penance, the more disturbing because it was strange, a form of personal control which she had not sought and could not at once accept.

Nor could she help thinking that some severer form of punishment was yet to be meted out to her, or might ensue by reason of one unavoidable error or another. Life had always been so with her. But, once here a time, things proved not so bad.

The large workroom with its hun-



dred machines and its tall windows, which afforded a stark view of the coal-pockets to the south, and the river with its boats and gulls, proved not unpleasing. The clean, bright windows, polished floors and walls—washed and cleaned by the inmates themselves, the nuns not disdaining to do their share—and the habits of the Sisters, their white-fringed hoods, black robes and clinking beads and their silent tread and low speech, impressed her greatly.

The fact that there was no severe reproof for any failure to comprehend at first, but only slow and patient explanations of simple things, not difficult in themselves to do; that aside from the routine duties, the marching in line with hands crossed over breast and head up, as well as genuflections at mass, prayers before and after meals, at rising and on retiring and at the peal of the Angelus, morning, noon and night, there was no real oppression, finally made her like it.

The girls who were here with her, shy or silent or cold or indifferent at first, and each with her world of past experiences, contacts and relationships locked in her heart, were still, placed as they were elbow to elbow at work, at meals, at prayer, at retiring, incapable of not achieving some kind of remote fellowship which eventually led to speech and confidences.

Thus the young girl who sat next at her right in the sewing-room—Viola Patters by name, a brave, blonde, cheerful little thing—although she had endured much that might be called ill-fortune, was still intensely interested in life.

By degrees and as they worked the two reached an understanding. Viola confessed that her father, who was a non-union painter by trade, had always worked well enough when he could get work, but that he managed badly and could not always get it. Her mother was sickly and they were very poor and there were many children.

Viola had first worked in a box factory, where she had been able to earn only three dollars or less at piece

work—"pasting corners," as she described it—and once she had been sworn at and even thrown away from a table at which she had been working because she didn't do it right, and then she quit. Then her father in turn swearing at her for her "uppishness," she had got work in a five-and-ten-cent store, where she had received three dollars a week and a commission of one per cent on her sales, which were not sufficient to yield more than a dollar more. Then she had secured a better place in a department store at five dollars a week, and there it was that she had come by the handsome boy who had caused her so much trouble.

He was a taxi-driver, who always had a car at his disposal when he worked, only it was very seldom that he cared to work. Although he married her swiftly enough and took her away from her family, still he had not supported her very well, and shortly after they were married he was arrested and accused with two others of stealing a machine and selling it, and after months and months of jail life he had been sentenced to three years in the penitentiary.

In the meantime he had called upon her to aid him, pressed her to raise sums of which she had never previously dreamed—and by ways of which she had never previously dreamed—was pleaded with, all but ordered—and still she loved him. And then in executing the "how" of it she had been picked up by the police and sent here, as had Madeleine, only she never told, not even to Madeleine, what the police had never discovered—that at the suggestion of her first love she had included robbery among her arts.

"But I don't care," she had whispered finally as they worked. "He was good to me, anyhow, when he had work. He was crazy about me, and he liked to go places and dance and eat and see shows when he had money, and he always took me. Gee, the times we've had! And if he wants me to stick to him when he gets out, I will. He ain't



half as bad as some. Gee, you oughta hear some of the girls talk!"

And so it was finally that Madeleine was induced to tell her story.

There were other girls here who, once this bond of sympathy was struck, were keen enough to tell their tales—sad, unfortunate, harried lives all—and somehow the mere telling of them restored to Madeleine some of her earlier faint confidence or interest in life. It was "bad," but it was vivid. For in spite of their unfortunate beginnings, the slime in which primarily and without any willing of their own they had been embedded and from which nearly all were seeking to crawl upwards, and bravely enough, they had heart for and faith in life.

In all cases, apparently, love was their star as well as their bane. They thought chiefly of the joy that might be had in joining their lives with some man or being out in the free world, working again possibly, at least in touch in some feeble way with the beauty and gayety of life, as beauty and gayety manifested themselves to them.

And so by degrees, the crash of her own original hopes echoing less and less loudly in the distance, the pain of her great shame and rude awakening passed farther and farther from her. The smoothness and regularity of this austere life, indifferent as it seemed at times, consoled her by its very security and remoteness from the world. It was lean and spare, to be sure, but it offered safety and rest to the mind and heart. Now, rising in her dim, silent ward of a morning, repeating her instructed prayers, marching in silence to chapel, to breakfast, to work, hearing only the soft hum of the machines, marching again to chapel, playing each day, but not too noisily, and finally retiring in the same ordered and silent way to her minute bed, she was soothed and healed.

And yet, or perhaps because of this, she could not help thinking of the clangor and crash of the world without. It had been grim and painful to her, but in

its rude, brutal way it had been alive. The lighted streets at night! The cars! That dancing pavilion in which once she had been taught to dance by the great blue sea! The vanished touches of her faithless lover's hands—his kisses—brief, so soon over! Where was he now in the great strange world outside? With whom? What was she like? And would he tire of her as quickly? Treat her as badly? Where was Tina? Frank? Her mother? What had happened to her mother? Not a word had she heard.

To Sister St. Agnes, after a time, sensing her to be generous, faithful, patient, she had confided all concerning herself and her mother, crying on her shoulder, and the Sister had promised to learn what she could. But the investigation proving that her mother had been sent to the workhouse, she deemed it best to say nothing for the present. Madeleine would find her quickly enough on returning to the world. Why cloud the new budding life with so shameful a memory?

## VI

AND then once more, in due time, and with the memory of these things clinging fast to her, she was sent forth into the world, not quite as inadequate as before, perhaps, but still with the limited equipment which her own innate disposition and comprehension compelled.

After many serious and presumably wise injunctions as to the snares and pitfalls of this world, and accompanied by a black-habited nun, who took her direct to one of those moral and religious families whose strict adherence to the tenets of this particular faith was held to provide an ideal example, she was left to her own devices and the type of work she had previously followed, the nuns themselves being hard put to it to discover anything above the most menial forms of employment for their various charges. Theirs was a type of schooling and training which did not rise above a theory of moral-



ity requiring not so much skill as faith and blind obedience.

And again, here, as in the institution itself, the idea of a faith, a religion, a benign power above that of man and seeking his welfare, surrounded her as the very air itself or as an aura, although she personally was by no means ready to accept it, never having given its serious thought.

Everywhere here, as in the institution itself, were little images or colored pictures of saints, their brows circled by stars or crowns, their hands holding sceptres or lilies, their bodies arrayed in graceful and soothing robes of white, blue, pink and gold. Their faces were serene, their eyes benignly contemplative, yet to Madeleine they were still images only, pretty and graceful, even comforting, but at so great variance to life as she knew it as to be little more than pretty pictures.

In the great church which they attended, and to which they persuaded her to accompany them, were more of these same candle-lit pictures of saints, images and altars starred with candles, many or few, at which she was wont to stare in wonder and awe. The vestments of the priest and the acolytes, the white-and-gold and red-and-gold of the chasuble and the stole and the cope, the gold and silver crosses, chalices and winecups, overawed her inexperienced and somewhat impressionable mind without convincing it of the imminence of superior forces whose significance or import she could in nowise guess. God, God, God—she heard of Him and the passion and death of the self-sacrificing Lord Jesus.

And here, as there, the silence, the order, the cleanliness and regularity, as well as simplicity, were the things which most invested her reason and offered the greatest contrasts to her old life.

She had not known or sensed the significance of these things before. Now, day by day, like the dripping of water, the ticking of time, they made an impression, however slight. Routine, routine, routine, and the habit and order

and color of a vast and autocratic religion, made their lasting impression upon her.

And yet, in spite of an occasional supervisory visit on the part of one or other of the nuns of the probation department, she was not only permitted but compelled to work out her life as best she might, and upon such wages as she could command or devise. For all the prayers and the good will of the nuns, life was as insistent and driving as ever. It did not appear to be so involved with religion. In spite of the admonitions of the church, the family for whom she was working saw little more in its religious obligation than that she should be housed and fed according to her material merits. If she wished to better herself, as she soon very clearly saw she must, she would have to develop a skill which she did not now have and which, once developed, would make her of small use here. At the same time, if the months spent in the institution had conveyed to her the reasonableness of making something better of her life than hitherto she had been able to do, the world, pleasure, hope clanged as insistently and as woefully as ever before.

But how? How? was the great problem. Hers was no resourceful, valiant soul, capable of making its own interesting way alone. Think as she would, and try, love, and love only, the admiration and ministering care of some capable and affectionate man was the only thing that seemed likely to solve for her the various earthly difficulties which beset her.

But even as to this, how, in what saving or perfect way, was love to come to her? She had made one mistake which in the development of any honest relationship with another would have to be confessed. And how would it be then? Would love, admiration, forgive? Love, love, love, and the peace and comfort of that happy routine home life which she saw operative in the lives of others—how it glimmered like a far-off star!

And again there was her mother.



It was not long after she had come from the institution that sheer loneliness, as well as a sense of daughterly responsibility and pity, had urged her to look up her mother, in order that she might restore to herself some little trace of a home, however wretched it might be. She had no one, as she proceeded to argue. At least in her own lonely life her mother provided, or would, an ear and a voice, sympathetic if begging, a place to go.

She had learned on returning to their last living-place on one of her afternoons off, that her mother had been sent away to the "Island," but had come back and since been sent to the city poor-farm. This last inquiry led eventually to her mother's discovery of her and of her fixing herself upon her once more as a dependent, until her death somewhat over a year later.

But in the meantime, and after all, life continued to call and call and to drive her on, for she was still full of the hope and fever of youth.

Once, before leaving the institution in which they had worked together, Viola Patters had said to her in one of those bursts of confidence based on attraction:

"Once you're outa here an' I am, too, I'd like to see you again, only there ain't no use your writin' me here, for I don't believe they'd give it to me. I don't believe they'd want us to run together. I don't believe they like me as well as they do you. But you write me, wherever you are, care of —," and here she gave a definite address—"an' I'll get it when I get out."

She assured Madeleine that she would probably be able to get a good place, once she was free of the control of the Sisters, and then she might be able to do something for her.

Often during these dark new days she thought of this, and being hard-pressed for reasonable interests in her life she finally wrote her, receiving in due time a request to come and see her.

But, as it proved, Viola was no avenue of improvement for her in her new mood. She was, as Madeleine soon

discovered, part of a small group which was making its way along a path which she had promised herself henceforth to avoid. Viola was more comfortably placed in quarters of her own than Madeleine had ever been, but the method by which she was forwarding her life she could not as readily accept.

Yet her own life, move about as she might and did after a time from one small position to another, in store or factory, in the hope of bettering herself, held nothing either. Day by day as she worked she sensed all the more clearly that the meagre tasks at which she toiled could bring her nothing of permanent value. Her mother was dead now, and she more alone than ever. During a period of several years, in which she worked and dreamed, leading a thin, underpaid life, her mind was ever on love and what it might do for her—the pressing of a seeking hand, the sanctuary of an enveloping heart.

And then, for the second time in her brief life, love came, or seemed to—at least in her own heart if nowhere else.

She had by now, and through her own efforts, attained to a clerkship in one of the great stores at the salary of seven dollars a week, on which she was trying to live. And then, behold, one day among her customers one of those suave and artful masters of the art of living by one's wits, with a fortune of looks in himself, to whom womanhood is a thing to be taken by an upward curl of a pair of mustachios, the vain placement of ringed locks, spotless and conspicuous linen, and clothes and shoes of a newness and lustre all but disturbing to a very work-a-day world. His manners and glances were of a winsomeness which only the feminine heart—and that unschooled in the valuelessness of veneer—fully appreciates.

Yes, the sheer grace of the seeking male, his shallow and heartless courtesy, the lustre of his eye and skin, a certain something of shabby-grand manner, such as she had never known in the particularly narrow world in which



she moved, was sufficient to arrest and fix her interest.

He leaned over and examined the stationery and pencils which she sold, commenting on prices, the routine of her work, smiled archly and suggested by his manner entire that she was one in whom he could be deeply interested. At the same time a certain animal magnetism, of the workings of which she was no more conscious than might be any stick or stone, took her in its tow.

Here was one out of many, a handsome beau, who was interested in her and her little life. The oiled and curled hair became the crown of a god; the mustachios and the sharp, cruel nose harmonies of exquisite beauty. Even the muscular, prehensile hands were rhythmic, musical in their movements. She had time only to sense the wonder of his perfect self before he went away. But it was to return another day, with an even more familiar and insinuating grace.

He was interested in her, as he frankly said the next time, and she must be his friend. At lunch-time one day he was waiting to take her to a better restaurant than she would ever have dreamed of entering; on another day it was to dinner that she accompanied him.

According to him, she was beautiful, wonderful. Her flower-like life was being wasted on so rude a task. She should marry him, and then her difficulties would be solved. He was one who, when fortune was with him, so he said, made much, much money. He might even take her from the city at times to see strange places and interesting scenes.

As for her own stunted life, from most of the details of which she forebore, he seemed in nowise interested. It was not due to any lack on her part in the past that her life had been so ill.

Love, love, love. . . . The old story. In a final burst of admiration and love for his generosity she told him of her one great error, which caused him a

few moments of solemn cogitation and was then dismissed as nothing of importance, a pathetic, childish mistake. Then there followed one of those swift and seemingly unguarded unions, a commonplace of the tangled self-preserving under-world of poverty. A clergyman was found whose moral assurances seemed to make the union ideal. Then a room in a commonplace boarding-house, and the newer and better life which eventually was to realize all was begun.

## VII

To those familiar with the brazen and relentless methods of a certain type of hawk of the underworld which picks fledglings from the nest and springlings from the fields and finds life itself only a hunting-ground in which those mentally or physically weaker than itself may be enslaved, this description will seem neither strained nor inadequate. Fagins of sex, creatures who change their women as they would their coats, they make an easy if reprehensible bed of their lives, and such of their victims as have known them well testify that for a while at least in their care or custody they were not unhappy.

So it was with Madeleine and this one. With amused and laughing tolerance toward her natural if witless efforts to build up a home atmosphere about their presumably joint lives, to build for a future in which they should jointly share, he saw in them only something trivial or ridiculous, whereas to her it was as though the heavens had opened and she was surveying a new world. For in his love and care there was to be peace. Latterly, if not now—for already he complained of conditions which made it impossible for him to work—the results of their several labors were to be pooled in order to prepare for that something better which would soon be achieved—a home, an ideally happy state somewhere. Even children were in her mind.

The mere fact that he shortly com-



plained of other temporary reverses which made it necessary for him and her to keep close watch over their resources, and that for the time being, until he "could arrange his affairs," she must find some employment which would pay much better than her old one, gave her no shock.

Indeed, it was an indescribable joy for her to do for her love, for love had come, that great solvent of all other earthly difficulties, that leveler of all but insurmountable barriers. Even now love was to make her life flower at last. There was an end to loneliness and the oppressive indifference of the great sea of life.

But, as in the first instance, so now the awakening was swift and disconcerting. Realizing the abject adoration in which she held his surface charms and that his thin, tricky soul was the beginning and the end of things for her, it was all the easier to assure her, and soon insist, that the easiest and swiftest way of making money, of which she was unfortunately aware, must be resorted to, for a great necessity had come upon him. The usual tale of a threatening disaster, a sudden loss at cards which might end in imprisonment for him and their enforced separation, was enough.

Swiftly he filled her ears with tales of rescues by women of many of his men friends similarly circumstanced, of the "fools" and "marks" that filled the thoroughfares to be captured and preyed upon by women. Why hesitate? Consider the meagre, beggarly wages she had previously earned, the nothingness of her life before. Why jeopardize their future now? Why be foolish, dull? Plainly it was nothing to love, as he saw it. Should it be so much to her? In this wise she was persuaded.

But now it was not the shame and the fear of arrest that troubled her, but the injury which love had done and was doing her, that cut and burned and seared and scarred.

Love, as she now began dimly to realize once more, should not be so.

S.S.—Oct.—4

More than anything else, if love was what she had always dreamed, should it not protect and save and keep her for itself? And now see. Love was sending her out again to loiter in doorways and before windows and "make eyes."

It was this that turned like a wheel in her brain and heart. For in spite of the roughness of her emotional experiences thus far, she had faith to believe that love should not be so, should not do so.

Those features which to this hour, and long after, like those features of her first love, seemed so worship-worthy, those eyes that had, or had pretended, to beam with love on her, the lips that had smiled so graciously on her and kissed hers, the hands and arms that had petted and held her, should not be part of the compulsion that sent her here.

No, love should be better than that. He himself had told her so at first—that she was worth more than all else to him—and now see!

And then one night, fully a year and a half later, the climax came. Being particularly irritated by some money losses and the need of enduring her at all, even though she might still prove of some value as a slave, he turned on her with a savage fury.

"What, only . . . ! Get to hell outa here! What do yuh think I am—a sucker? An' let go my arm! Don't come that stuff on me. I'm sick of it. Don't hang on my arm, I tell yuh! I'm tired, damned tired! Get out! Go on—beat it, an' don't come back, see? I'm through—through—yuh hear me? I mean what I say. I'm through, once an' fer all. Beat it, an' fer good. Don't come back. I've said that before, but this time it *goes!* Go on, now, quick—Scat!—an' don't ever let me see yuh around here any more, yuh hear?—yuh damned piece o' mush, yuh!"

He pushed her away, throwing open the door as he did so, and finding her still pleading and clinging, violently pushed and threw her out, cutting her left eye and the back of her left hand



against the jamb of the door by the violence with which he threw her.

There was a cry of "Fred! Fred! Please! Please!"—and then the door was slammed and she was left, as she had never been quite so bereft before, leaning disconsolately and brokenly against the stair-rail outside.

And now, as before, the cruelty and inscrutability of life weighed on her, only now, less than before, had she hope wherewith to buoy herself. It was all so dark, so hopeless. Often in this hour she thought of the swift, icy waters of the river, glistening under a winter moon, and then again of the peace and quiet of the House of the Good Shepherd, its shielding remoteness from life, the only true home or sanctuary she had ever known. And so, brooding and repressing occasional sobs, she made her way toward it, down the long streets, thinking of the pathetically debasing love-life that was now over—the dream of love that never could be again, for her.

### VIII

THE stark red walls of the institution stood as before, only dim and gray and cold under a frosty winter moon. It was three of a chill, cold morning. She had come a long way, drooping, brooding, half-freezing and crying. More than once on the way the hopelessness of her life and her dreams had given her pause, causing her to turn again with renewed determination toward the river—only the vivid and reassuring picture she had retained of this same grim and homely place, its restricted peace and quiet, the sympathy of Sister St. Agnes and Mother St. Bertha, had carried her on.

En route she speculated as to whether they would receive her now, so objectionable and grim was her tale. And yet she could not resist continuing toward it, so reassuring was its memory, only to find it silent, not a single light burning. But, after all, there was one, at a side door—not the great cold gate by which she had first been ad-

mitted but another to one side, to her an all but unknown entrance; and to it after some brooding hesitation she made her way, ringing a bell and being admitted by a drowsy nun, who ushered her into the warmth and quiet of the inner hallway. Once in she mechanically followed to the bronze grille which, as prison bars, obstructed the way, and here on one of the two plain chairs placed before a small aperture she now sank wearily and looked through.

Her cut eye was hurting her and her bruised hands. On the somewhat faded jacket and crumpled hat, pulled on indifferently because she was too hurt to think or care, there was some blown snow. And when the Sister Secretary in charge of the room after midnight, hearing footsteps, came to the grille, she looked up wanly, her little red, rough hands crossed on her lap.

"Mother," she said beseechingly, "may I come in?"

Then remembering that only Mother St. Bertha could admit her, added wearily:

"Is Mother St. Bertha here? I was here before. She will know me."

The Sister Secretary surveyed her curiously, sensing more of the endless misery that was ever here, but seeing that she was sick or in despair hastened to call her superior, whose rule it was that all such requests for admission should be referred to her. There was no stir in the room in her absence. Presently patterned feet were heard, and the face of Mother St. Bertha, wrinkled and a-weary, appeared at the square opening.

"What is it, my child?" she asked curiously if softly, wondering at the crumpled presence at this hour.

"Mother," began Madeleine tremulously, looking up and recognizing her, "don't you remember me? It is Madeleine. I was here four years ago. I was in the girl's ward. I worked in the sewing-room."

She was so beaten by life, the perpetual endings to her never more than tremulous hopes, that even now and here she expected little more than an



indifference which would send her away again.

"Why, yes, of course I remember you, my child. But what is it that brings you now, dear? Your eye is cut, and your hand."

"Yes, mother, but please don't ask—not now. Oh, please let me come in! I am so tired. I've had such a hard time!"

"Of course, my child," said the Mother, moving to the door and opening it. "You may come in. But what has happened, child? How is it that your cheek is cut, and your hands?"

"Mother," pleaded Madeleine wearily, "must I answer now? I am so unhappy! Can't I just have my old dress and my bed for tonight—that little bed under the lamp?"

"Why, yes, dear, you may have them, of course," said the nun, tactfully sensing a great grief. "And you need not talk now. I think I know how it is. Come with me."

She led the way along bare, dimly lit corridors and up cold solid iron stairs, echoing to the feet, until once more, as in the old days, the severe but spotless room in which were the baths and the hampers for soiled clothes was reached.

"Now, my child," she said, "you may undress and bathe. I will get something for your eye."

And so here at last, once more, Madeleine put aside the pathetic if showy finery that for a time had adorned and shamed her: a twilled skirt she had only recently bought in the pale hope of interesting *him*, the commonplace little hat for which she had paid ten dollars, the striped shirtwaist, once a pleasure to her in the hope that it would please *him*.

In a kind of dumbness of despair she took off her shoes and stockings and, as the Mother left, entered the warm, clean bath which had been provided. She stifled a sob as she did so, and others as she bathed. Then she stepped out and dried her body and covered it with the clean, simple slip of white which had been laid on a chair, brushing her hair and touching her eye, until

the Mother Sister returned with an unguent wherewith to dress it.

Then she was led along other silent passages, once dreary enough but now healing in their sense of peace and rest, and so into the great room set with row upon row of simple white iron beds, covered with their snowy linen and illuminated only by the minute red lamps or the small candles burning before their idealistic images here and there, beneath which so many like herself were sleeping. Over the bed which she had once occupied, and which by chance was then vacant, burned the one little lamp which she recognized as of old—her lamp, as she had always thought of it—a thin and flickering flame, before an image of the Virgin. At sight of it she repressed a sob.

"You see, my child," said the Mother Superior poetically, "it must have been waiting for you. Anyhow it is empty. Perhaps it may have known you were coming."

She spoke softly so that the long rows of sleepers might not be disturbed, then proceeded to turn down the coverlets.

"Oh, Mother," Madeleine suddenly whispered softly as she stood by the bed, "won't you let me stay always? I never want to go out any more. I have had such a hard time. I will work so hard for you if you will let me stay!"

The experienced Sister looked at her curiously. Never before had she heard such a plea.

"Why, yes, my child," she said. "If you wish to stay I'm sure it can be arranged. It is not as we usually do, but you are not the only one who has gone out in the past and come back to us. I am sure God and the Blessed Virgin will hear your prayer for whatever is right. But now go to bed and sleep. You need rest. I can see that. And tomorrow, or any time, or never, as you choose, you may tell me what has happened."

She urged her very gently to enter and then tucked the covers about her, laying finally a cool, wrinkled hand on her forehead. For answer Madeleine



seized and put it to her lips, holding it so.

"Oh, Mother," she sobbed as the Sister bent over her, "don't ever make me go out in the world again, will you? You won't, will you? I'm so tired! I'm so tired!"

"No, dear, no," soothed the Sister, "not unless you wish it. And now rest. You need never go out in the world again unless you wish."

And withdrawing the hand from the kissing lips, she tiptoed silently from the room.



## A College Education

*By T. F. Mitchell*

HE always regretted he had never gone to college. He realized all the benefits that he had missed and resolved that his son should not miss them also. The son entered college in due time. His father was overjoyed and waited to hear the first report of his progress. The first report he received was that his son had been killed in the freshman-sophomore pole climbing contest.



## Rust

*By Mary Carolyn Davies*

IRON left in the rain  
And fog and dew  
With rust is covered.—Pain  
Rusts into beauty, too.

I know full well that this is so:  
—I had a heartbreak long ago.



WRIST WATCH:—A device for telling its feminine owner what time it was when it stopped.





# City Folks

By Thyra Samter Winslow

## I

JOE and Mattie Harding lived in Harlem. They lived in a four-room apartment in the second of a row of brown, unattractive-looking apartment buildings—six of them just alike—in One Hundred and Thirty-second Street.

They lived in Apartment 52, which means the fifth floor, and there was no elevator. But the rent was reasonable, forty dollars, and both Joe and Mattie said they didn't mind a "walk-up" at all—you get used to it after a while, and Mattie knew it kept her hips down. Then, too, by going to the fifth floor, you get a much better view, though why a view of the building across the street—another brown barracks of exactly the same age and design—is desirable, only Joe and Mattie and other similarly situated folks know. The air was cleaner, though, on the fifth floor—they felt that anyone would know that.

One Hundred and Thirty-second Street, Harlem, lacked all outstanding features. If the street signs had suddenly disappeared, there would have been nothing to identify it, to pin it to—a bleak street, without trees, a fairly clean street, decent and neat looking (after the garbage man had passed and the tins had disappeared), wide enough to lack misery, narrow enough to lack grandeur.

We are about to have two meals with Joe and Mattie—the most important meals of their day, for Joe's lunch was usually a sandwich and a glass of milk at the Automat, or beans or a beef stew in the lunch room across from his office; Mattie's, a glass of soda and a sandwich or a dish of ice cream, if she

was down-town—it is a shame about the soda tax—a scramble of left overs from last night's dinner, if she spent the day at home.

Breakfast:

The alarm clock had buzzed at six-thirty, as it always did. It was a good alarm clock and had cost \$1.48 at Liggett's, two years before.

Mattie's little dog, who slept in the front hall, had heard the alarm and scrambled into their bedroom with his usual yip of pleasure—he was rather deaf, but he could make out sounds as definite as the ringing of a bell and he listened for the alarm each morning. He was a nice little fellow, a white poodle, overly fat, with red-rimmed eyes. If you didn't molest him nor try to pet him nor step on him, he wouldn't snap nor try to bite you. Mattie and Joe were quite fond of him and took him for walks in Central Park on Sundays or around Harlem in the evenings. His name had, in turn, been, stylishly, Snowball, Snoodles and Snookums and had at last reached Ikkle Floppit, all of which he answered to with stolid indifference.

Joe had heard the alarm, had jumped up and turned it off, and had waked Mattie, who slept more soundly. Ikkle Floppit had jumped, wheezily, upon the bed and licked all visible portions of Mattie's face. Mattie, then, had given up trying to doze again and had stroked the dog's uneven coat with a fond hand.

Toilets followed, rapid plunges into the dwarf-sized white tub with its rather insecure shower attachment—Joe talking while he shaved, about the office, the men who worked with him,



his boss who didn't appreciate him, the weather that was still too warm for comfort, their friends, the Taylors, who they both agreed were too stuck up for words since Taylor had got his new job.

"His people aren't anything at all," Mattie had said, "awfully ordinary—and the way they do put on airs, you'd think they amounted to something. Why, my cousin Mabel knew her sister in Perryville, where they used to live, and she said they weren't anything at all there. And now, how they do go on with a maid and a car. They've never even taken us for a ride in their old car and they can hold their breath until I'd step into it. It beats all—"

And Joe, his face twisted for the razor's path beyond the possibilities of conversation, had grunted assent.

Now, Mattie had completed the simple breakfast, six pieces of toast, buttered unevenly and a bit burned on the edges, as always, a halved orange for each of them, some coffee and some bought preserves with a slight strawberry-like flavor. She and Joe faced each other over the almost clean tablecloth—it had been clean on Sunday and this was just Tuesday morning.

The dining-room was small, lighted vaguely with two court windows. Even now, at seven-thirty, the electric light had been turned on in the red and green glass electrolier.

Mattie knew the electrolier was out of fashion, she would have preferred a more modern "inverted bowl," but this one was included with the apartment, so there seemed nothing to do about it. She would also have preferred mahogany to the fumed oak dining-room set, bought when they were married, eight years before—she had bought the mahogany tea wagon with her last year's Christmas money from Joe, looking forward to the time when they could buy a whole new mahogany set.

Mattie was not at all a bad-looking breakfast companion, seated there in her half-clean pink gingham bungalow apron—she wore these aprons constant-

ly in the house to save her other clothes. She was a slender, brown-haired woman, of about thirty, with clear brown eyes, a nose that turned slightly upward, a mouth inclined to be a little large, rather uneven but white teeth— indefinite features, a pleasant, usual, hard-to-place face.

And Joe, across from her, was equally pleasing, with a straight nose and rather a weak chin, dark hair starting to recede just a little at thirty-three, sloping shoulders inclined a bit to the roundness of the office man.

"What's in the paper, Joe?" asked Mattie, already nibbling toast.

Joe, deep in the morning *World*, threw out interesting items—the progress of a murder trial, news of an airplane flight.

They talked about little things, a friend Joe had passed on the street the day before, the choice of a show for Friday or Saturday night—they tried to attend the theater once each week, during the winter.

The door bell rang, three short rings. Ikkle Floppit gave three asthmatic yips. Mattie threw down her napkin, sprung to her feet.

"I'll go," she said, as she usually said it, "you go on eating or you'll be late again. I bet it's nothing but a bill, anyhow."

She returned in a moment with a thick letter in her hand.

"From your mother, Joe," she said.

She knew the printed address in the corner of the envelope, "The Banner Store, General Merchandise, E. J. Harding, Prop., Burton Center, Missouri," the neat, old-fashioned handwriting, the post-mark.

Mattie and Joe had come from Burton Center, Mattie eight years and Joe nine years before. They had grown up together in Burton Center, one of the jolly crowd who attended the High School, went to Friday night dances, later were graduated into the older crowd, which meant a few more dances, went to the Opera House when a show came to town, had happy love affairs.



Joe and Mattie became engaged three years after Joe left High School, which was the year after Mattie graduated. Joe went to work at the Banner Store, under his father. But youth and ambition knew not Burton Center, so, a little later, Joe had come to New York in search of fortune.

He had not obeyed the usual law of fiction and forgotten Mattie, nor had Mattie changed while she waited. No, though Joe found neither fame nor fortune, he did get an office job that looked as if it might support two in comfort, if Mattie and Joe were the two concerned, took a vacation, went back to Burton Center, found Mattie even more alluring and dimpled and giggling than he had remembered her—how much prettier Burton Center girls looked than those in New York!—and they were married.

Eight years, then, of New York, of subway rides, of the weekly theater, the weekly restaurant dinner, of apartment hunting about every second October, of infrequent clothes buying, of occasional calls on stray acquaintances, of little quarrels and little peace-makings, weekly letters from home—little lives going on—

Joe tore open the letter.

"Gee, it's a thick one," he said.

Then:

"Well, I guess they are all well or ma wouldn't have written so much. Listen, Mattie."

Joe read the letter, a folksy letter—Mrs. Harding, senior, was vell and so was "your father," as all mothers speak of their husbands to their children, in letters. She had seen Millie's mother a few days before and she was looking well and hoping to see them soon in Burton Center. The youngest Rosemond girl was engaged to a Mr. Secor from St. Louis, who was in the lumber business.

Then there followed, long and unparagraphed, something that made Joe and Mattie look at each other, hard and seriously, across the table. For Joe's mother had written something that they had always thought might be suggested

to them but which they had never discussed, even with each other:

*"Your father isn't as well as he once was, nor as young, you know, and, though you need not worry about him, he is eating and sleeping fine, even in hot weather, I think it would be better if you and Mattie came here to live. You could step right into the store and take charge of things as soon as you wanted to. It is not a big store as you know, but your father has always made a nice living from it and Burton Center is growing right along. The Millers have put up some new bungalows out on Crescent Hill, you'd be surprised to see how it has grown up out there, all of the young people are moving out there and with the new Thirteenth Street car line it is very convenient. The cottages are all taken but two, both white with green blinds and room back of them for garages and we could get you one of them if you wanted us to. The George Hendricks are living there and Mr. and Mrs. Tucker and the Williams boy, Phillip, I think that's his name, you used to go with. The new country club isn't far from there and you could play tennis after work, which would be good for you. I wish you could make up your mind at once, so you could get here before long or your father will have to get a man to help him, for he really ought to have more time to himself and take a nap after dinner, and now that the fall trade is starting. Talk this over with Mattie and let us know what you think about it and let us know as soon as you can. I hope you are keeping well in this changeable weather. Your father sends love to both and so do I.*

*"Affectionately, your Mother."*

Mattie and Joe looked at each other, looked and looked and forgot their toast and coffee. But they saw each other not at all. Nor did they visualize One Hundred and Thirty-second Street, New York, drab and bare, nor even Fifth Avenue nor Broadway.

They saw a little town, with rows of



old trees along its quiet streets, little white houses on little squares of green, each house with its hedge or its garden or its hammocked lawn, peace, and the smell of growing things after a rain—

"What say, Mattie?" asked Joe. "Sound pretty good? Of course, you've always said you loved New York and I don't want to persuade you against your will. Perhaps you wouldn't care to move—still, Burton Center, we've got some good friends there—it'd be sort of fun, seeing the old crowd, belonging to a country club, tennis, things like that, even managing the business. But, of course, if you wouldn't want to leave the city—"

Mattie, mentally, had far outdistanced him.

She clapped her hands, pleasantly excited.

"Joe, can't you just see that little house—I bet it's awfully cute. Last summer, when we were out in the country, I certainly did envy people living in little houses—I get so tired of New York, sometimes. But I never wanted to say anything, knowing how much you liked it here. But that little house—we could sell all of our furniture except the tea wagon and the table in the living-room and my new dressing-table—it really would be cheaper to buy new things than to pay for shipping. And we could find out how many windows there are and I could get some new cretonne here—sort of set the styles in Burton Center. It sure would be funny, living back there and knowing everybody. Here I never see a soul I know in weeks, or talk to anybody. Honest, sometimes I get just hungry for—for people. The trouble is, we haven't really got anything here."

"I know," Joe nodded. "New York's all right for some people—if you've got money. It's a great city all right, but we don't get anything out of it. I get so sick of being squeezed into subways night and morning—hardly standing room all the way home—and no place to go Sundays or evenings but a movie or a show or to see people who live miles away and don't care anything

about you anyhow and who you see about twice a year. Burton Center will look awfully good—folks take an interest in you, there."

"You bet they do."

"And it isn't as if I've failed here. I haven't. I'm due for another raise pretty soon—but we aren't putting anything aside, getting any place. It isn't as if we were terribly poor. You look awfully well in your clothes on the street, but we are always having to skimp and do without things—we never have the best of anything, always cheap seats at shows or cheap meals in second-class restaurants, a cheap street to live on—it gets on a person's nerves."

"Why, I didn't know you felt that way, Joe. I thought you liked New York. Why, it makes me so jealous, going down Fifth Avenue, seeing all those people in limousines, not a bit better nor better looking than I am, all dressed up, lolling back so—so superior, with nasty little dogs not near as nice as Floppit—and with chauffeurs and everything. Why, in Burton Center, we'd be somebody, as good as anyone. We could fix up that house awfully nice—and have a little garden and all that. But you said you hated the Banner Store so—now don't go and make up your mind—"

"You needn't worry about me. The Banner Store is all right—I think differently about things than I did years ago. I thought the city was just going to fall apart in my hand—but I found someone else got here first. I'm not complaining, you know. It isn't that I've failed—why, in Burton Center, they'll look at us as a success, we'll be city folks, don't you see. They know I haven't failed. I didn't come sneaking back the year after I left, the way Ray Wulburg did. No, sir, when folks came to New York to visit, we showed them a good time, took 'em to restaurants and shows—they think we got along fine here—that we're all right—"

"You bet they do, Joe. But I just can hardly wait to see that cottage—and everybody. I bet Crescent Hill is awfully pretty. Tonight, you write to



your mother—don't make it too sudden, you know, or too anxious—for you know how she is—she means fine, but she'll like to spread the news about us coming back. You just say that, under the circumstances, as long as your father is getting old and needs you, you feel it's your duty to go there and as soon as you can arrange your affairs and resign your position and train one of your assistants so that he can take care of your work—"

"You leave that to me. I can fix that part up all right."

The buzzer of the dumb-waiter zinged into their talk.

"Joe, there's the janitor. It's late. You'd better hurry. You know the call-down you got last week for being late."

Mattie and Joe arose simultaneously, Joe grabbed his paper, folded it conveniently, hurried to the door, Mattie after him.

"Going down-town today?" he asked.

"Thought I would, when I get the house straightened up. I want to look at a new waist. My good one is starting to tear at the back."

"All right. I'll be home early, about six-thirty—won't have to stay overtime. In a few months, I'll be my own boss, no hurrying off in the morning or rushing home in subways—we'll fix that letter up tonight."

He brushed off his mouth with his hand and gave Mattie the usual and rather hearty good-bye kiss, and, closing the door behind him, Joe and Mattie party for the day with visions of little houses nestling in green gardens uppermost in their minds.

### III

#### DINNER:

Dinner time with the Hardings varied slightly according to the way Mattie had spent the afternoon, the amount of work at Joe's office and where the Hardings were dining. They usually dined at home, but, once a week, usually Saturday, when they followed the feast with a visit to the

theater, they ate at one of the table d'hôte restaurants some place within ten blocks of Broadway and Forty-second Street.

They thought themselves quite cosmopolitan because they had been to Italian, Greek, French, Chinese, Russian, Japanese and Assyrian restaurants, choosing in each the dish prepared for the curious—and eating it according to American table customs as they practised them.

This particular Tuesday they were dining at home.

Joe reached the apartment exactly at six-thirty, the trip home taking half an hour. Joe had been watching the clock for the last twenty minutes of his business day so as to escape at the first possible opportunity.

Mattie, in the kitchen, heard his key in the lock and hurried to greet him. They kissed quite as fondly as they had in the morning, Floppit gave a little yip of welcome and received a pat on the head in reply.

Dinner was nearly ready, Mattie informed Joe, table set and all.

Joe hurried with his ablutions and reached the dining-room, accompanied by his newspaper, the *Journal* this time, at a quarter of seven. He divided the paper so that Mattie might have the last page, where are shown the strips of comics—he had read them hanging to a strap in the subway. Then he helped Mattie to bring in the hot dishes from the kitchen.

There was a small platter of five chops, fried quite brown, two for each of them, and one—to be cut into bits later—for Ikkle Floppit. Mattie always fried chops or steaks the days she went down-town and sometimes, other days, besides.

There were potatoes, in their jackets to save her the trouble of peeling them, a dish of canned corn. There was a neat square of butter, too, and some thinly sliced bread on a silver-plated bread plate—a last year's Christmas present from one of Mattie's aunts—and a small dish of highly-spiced pickles.



Besides this, on the new tea wagon stood two pieces of bakery pastry, of a peculiarly yellow color that had aimed at but far surpassed the result of eggs in the batter.

They sat down. Joe served the chops, Mattie the potatoes and corn. Mattie had put on her bungalow apron as soon as she returned home—so as to save her suit from the spots and wear incidental to dinner-getting. Joe looked just as he had in the morning, plus a small amount of beard and minus his coat and vest.

Yet, as the morning's conversation had been spontaneous and enthusiastic and happy, this evening's meal had a curious cloud of restraint over it.

"Good dinner," said Joe, after his first mouthful.

"Yes, it does taste good," agreed Mattie.

"Go down-town?"

"Uh-huh, I went down about eleven. Just got home an hour ago. I looked at the waists but didn't get any—they seemed awfully high. I may go down and get one tomorrow or Thursday. Any news in the paper?"

"Not much doing," Joe rustled his own sheets.

He never really read at dinner but he liked to have the paper near him.

"Look at Floppit, Joe. Isn't he cute, standing up that way? I've just got to give him a bite. It won't make him too fat, not what I give him. Come here, Missus' lamb."

Silence, then, save for the sound of knife against plate, a curious silence, a silence of avoidance. Then meaningless sentences, bits about anything, a struggle to appear happy, indifferent.

Joe, then:

"See anyone down-town you know? Where'd you have lunch? Thought maybe you'd call up and have lunch with me."

"I did think of it, but I didn't come down your way. I stopped at Loft's and had chocolate cake and a cherry sundae. No—I didn't see anyone I knew—exactly . . . Anything happen at the office?"

"Well, nothing much. We got that Detroit order."

"Did you, Joe? I'm sure glad of that."

A silence. Then, Joe, suddenly, enthusiastically, as if some barrier had broken, as if he could no longer stay, repressed, upon the path he had set for himself.

"Say, Mattie, guess what happened this afternoon! You know Ferguson, the fellow who used to be in our office, whose brother is in the show business? Well, he came in and gave me a couple of seats to see 'Squaring the Triangle' for Friday night. They say it's a good show and in for a long run, but they want to keep the house filled while the show is new, till it gets a start."

"Did he, honestly? Say, that's great, isn't it? Where are they, downstairs?"

"Sure. You don't think he'd give away balcony seats, or at least offer them to me, do you? Remember, he gave us some last Spring. That makes three times this year we've been to shows on passes. Pretty good, eh, Mattie?"

"Well I guess yes. We're some people, knowing relatives of managers. I tell you, I think—"

A pause, then.

Mattie's face lost its sudden smile and resumed its sadness of the earlier part of the meal.

"What's the matter?" asked Joe.

"Nothing the matter with me."

"Something else happened, too," Joe went on, enthusiastically, "at noon, I'd just left Childs'—and guess who I passed on the street?"

"Someone we know?"

"We don't know him exactly."

"Oh, I can't guess. Tell me."

"I know you can't—well, it was—William Gibbs McAdoo! Honest to goodness—McAdoo. It sure seemed funny. There he was, walking down the street, just like I've seen him in the movies half a dozen times. It sure gives you a thrill, seeing people like that."

Why the mention of William G. McAdoo should bring tears to the eyes



of a woman who had never met him may be inexplicable to some. But tears came into the eyes of Mattie Harding. She wiped her eyes on the corner of her bungalow apron, sniffed a little, came over to Joe, put her arms around him.

"I just—just can't stand it," she sobbed. "I've been worrying and worrying. Your seeing McAdoo seems the strangest thing, after what happened to me."

"What was it, Mattie?"

Quite kindly and understandingly, Joe pushed his chair back from the table, gathered his wife on his knee.

"What was it, honey? Come tell Joe."

"It wasn't anything—anything to cry about. I—don't know what's the matter with me. It—it was in Lord & Taylor's, this afternoon. I was looking at gloves—and I looked up—and there, right beside me, not two feet away, stood Billie Burke. Honestly! I know it was her. She looked exactly like her pictures—and I saw her in 'The Runaway' years ago, and not long ago in the movies. Yes, sir, Billie Burke. Joe, she's simply beautiful."

"Well, well, think of seeing Billie Burke!"

"And Joe, when I saw her, the awfullest feeling came over me. I tried not to tell you about it—after the letter this morning, I'd been thinking about Burton Center—but seeing Billie Burke just knocked it all out. Joe, you know I love you and want to do what you want—but, I—I just can't move to Burton Center—unless you've got your heart set on it. I'd go then, of course—any place. But I don't want to be—be buried alive in that little town. Imagine those people—never seeing or doing anything—no new shows or famous people—nor any kind of life. And here I went down-town and saw Billie Burke and you—"

Joe's pats became even fonder. He smoothed her hair with his too-pale hand.

"There, there, don't cry. It's all right. Nobody's asking or expecting

you to go to Burton Center. Funny thing, that. I had the same feeling. First, passing McAdoo—and then those theater tickets. I guess there's something about New York that gets you. They've got to forget that stuff about Burton Center, I can tell you that."

Mattie jumped off Joe's lap, took the used dishes from the table, put on the pastry and sat down in her own place, across from Joe.

"This is good," said Joe, taking a bite; "where'd you get it?"

"At that little new French Pastry shop we passed the night the black dog tried to bite Floppit."

"Oh, yes, looked nice and clean in there."

They ate their pastry slowly. Mattie dried her eyes. Joe spoke to her:

"Say, Mattie, don't worry for a minute more about that Burton Center stuff. After eight years of living in the city, seeing famous people, living right in the center of things—didn't we see all the warships last spring and airplanes nearly every day? They can't expect us to live in a rube place like Burton Center. We're used to more, that's all there is to it."

"I know," said Mattie, "I'd just die if I couldn't walk down Fifth Avenue and see what people wore. It's just weighed on me, terribly. I just saw us on the train going out there, and living in an awful little house without hot water or steam heat—and seeing Billie Burke just—"

The 'phone burred into the conversation.

Mattie answered it, as usual, assuming a nonchalant, society air.

"Yes, this is the Hardings' apartment. Yes, this is Mrs. Harding speaking. Who? Oh, Mrs. Taylor. How do you do. I haven't heard your voice in ages. We're fine, thank you. . . . No, I don't know much news. A friend of Mr. Harding's, a brother of Ferguson, the theatrical producer, invited us to see 'Squaring the Triangle' as his guests on Friday. They say it's a wonderful show. We saw 'The Tattletale' last Saturday. Yes, we liked



it a great deal. . . . Saturday afternoon? Wait and I'll ask Mr. Harding if he has an engagement."

Hand over telephone mouthpiece, then:

"Want to go riding with the Taylors in their new car Saturday afternoon and stop at some road-house for supper?"

Resuming the polite conversational tone of the telephone:

"Yes, thank you, Mr. Harding and I will be delighted to go. Awfully nice of you. At four? Fine. By the way, did I tell you I saw Billie Burke today? I did. She looked simply beautiful, not a day older than she looked last year. Wonderful hair, hasn't she? And Mr. Harding passed William G. McAdoo on the street. Yes, New York is a wonderful city. You did? Isn't that nice! All right, we'll be ready on Saturday—don't bother coming up, just honk for us, that's what all our friends do. Thanks so much, goodbye."

Mattie sat down at the table again.

"Well," she said, "it's time they asked us—they'll take us now and be through for a year. Still we may have a nice time. But—what we were talking about—you sure you are in earnest about Burton Center?"

"You bet I am. The folks at home had the wrong dope, that's all. Why, I've got my position here, too important to give up at anyone's beck and call. Didn't the boss congratulate me today on the way I wrote those Detroit letters? I bet I get a raise in another three months."

They folded their napkins into their

silver-plated napkin-rings, rose from the table, walked together into the living-room, stood looking out into the drab bleakness of One Hundred and Thirty-second Street, across to the factory-like, monotonous row of apartment houses opposite, where innumerable lights twinkled from other little caves, where other little families lived, humdrum, unmarked, inconsequential, gray. And from the minds of Mattie and Joe had faded the visions of little white houses and cool, green lanes.

They remembered, instead, the city—their city—Mattie had seen a moving picture taken, once, from a Fifth Avenue bus—two years ago Joe had been introduced to—actually taken the hand of—William Jennings Bryan—they had both seen James Montgomery Flagg draw a picture for the Liberty Loan on the Public Library steps—a woman in a store had pointed out Lady Duff Gordon to Mattie—they had seen, on the street, a man who looked exactly like Caruso—it might easily have been . . .

"I'll write that letter right away and have it over with," said Joe, "I won't hurt ma's feelings—she and Dad mean all right. Living in Burton Center all their lives, we can't expect them to understand things. It's ridiculous, of course. I don't know what came over us for a minute this morning. Of course we've got the crowded subways, here, and it costs a lot to live and—and all that. You can't expect a place to be perfect. But—New Yorkers like us couldn't stand that dead Burton Center stuff for five minutes. Why, we're, we're—city folks!"



THE real hero is the man whose wife likes him to come home to luncheon.





# The Opponent

By *L. M. Hussey*

## I

THEY had eaten their dinner; he was reading now; she looked across at him and realized the magnitude of her task. It was not yet dusk enough to turn on the lights and he sat near the window, inclining his head a little toward the book. A beam of sunlight fell over his face, revealing the transparent freshness of his skin. No lines were visible on his smooth cheeks. He was so appallingly young!

She wanted to talk to him, was about to speak to him, but restrained herself in time. Even in such a small way she must not let him feel any disagreeable necessity, any limitation of his former complete freedom. She hoped that he would understandingly observe the incessant requirements of younger women, their innumerable requisitions for attention, and so attribute his own freedom to the wisdom of her greater maturity. She knew her success would depend upon her ability to convince him of his luck in marrying an older woman.

Now he stood up.

Quickly averting her eyes, she pretended to read the newspaper in her lap. He glanced at her for several seconds and she felt his eyes swiftly examining her. But her gaze was steadfast upon the newspaper.

He turned from the window and walked two or three times up and down the room.

This restlessness was not a new thing; he had manifested it, more or less, for a month now. To find him pacing the room slowly, or staring out

of the window in abstraction, had brought her her first real fears, her initial questioning of her powers.

Now, after a few more seconds, she dropped the paper and spoke to him.

"Don't know what to do with yourself?" she asked.

He smiled at her faintly.

"No, no. Just a little restless. . . ."

"Do you want to go out, dear?"

"Do *you*?" he asked.

Of course she wanted to be with him. The hours when she was alone were intolerably long. But she restrained her wish. Her purpose was to give him that necessary sense of freedom.

"Not particularly," she said. "I thought you might want to take a little walk yourself; I'll stay here and read."

Looking down at the carpet, he frowned faintly.

"I believe I will," he said at last. "Been indoors all day; it sort of gets on the nerves. You don't mind, do you, Emily? I won't be long."

She stood up, went over to him, and put her hand on his shoulder.

For a second only a certain pity came to her that was wholly unselfish. She had an impulse to go, to go forever, and so free him of her limitation. But this was impossible after all she had dreamed, and in the face of her astounding hopes. But her fears were making her foolish; assuredly he loved her—he would never consent to a parting from her; and this thought was warming, like one of his own caresses. She patted his shoulder gently.

"Don't hurry back until you want to," she said. "Stay as long as you like. I won't be lonesome; I'll be waiting for you!"



Now he smiled, and, touching her cheek affectionately with his lips, he left the room with a quick step. She heard him descend the stairs, take up his hat in the hall and leave the house. Then she went to the window, but he did not cross the street, and the porch prevented any view of him.

On the opposite side of the street a girl was passing. She was quite young, full of self-consciousness and the consciousness of sex; she glanced about her eagerly, she patted the puffed hair that enclosed her ears, she toyed with a chain of beads that was pendant from her neck. The sight of her put a fear in the heart of the watching woman. Suppose he was going out to meet a young girl!

Her instinct to fight for what she had gained whirled her from the window, took her a dozen steps across the room with a determination to follow him. Before she reached the door her impulse faded. A depressing languor possessed her.

Suppose he did, suppose he found a young girl on the street—what could she do?

With all her wish to protect herself, to insure her matured dreams, she had no weapons of direct defence. The knowledge of her powerlessness brought her dismay. An unwonted regret, of late an emotion she knew with increasing frequency, crept into her heart. She sat motionless in the chair, with a deep frown cutting her forehead.

She was possessed with the conviction of her folly in having married him. She was acutely conscious of the separating barrier nearly fifteen years made between them.

At first she had been proud of her ability to charm him. Even in these days, moments of that initial pride returned. After all, how easy it had been to secure his name—what a naïve being a young man was! She had no just foundation for pride. But for this fear that now replaced her earlier emotion there was an adequate basis. She had given herself over to hopes, to the obscure enchantments of romance, to the

glamorous expectations that should have died with the passing of her youth—and she dreaded her disillusionment.

It had grown entirely dark. The red gleams of the fading sunlight had been replaced by a ghoulish glow from the arc lamp across the street, entering the window like a stealthy presence.

She heard the door open below and she knew that he had returned.

Arising swiftly, she went to the wall and switched on the light. She was standing in the door as he ascended the stairs.

"Where did you go?" she asked.

"Took a walk up to the park," he answered. "I sat there and watched the kids making fools of themselves—just like I used to do!"

She understood. He had been watching lovers on the park benches. She smiled half pathetically.

"I suppose you felt full of regrets?"

He put his hands on her shoulders and kissed her. It was a perfunctory embrace. She understood it instantly as a temporizing gesture that gave him a second to frame the lie of his denial.

"Don't believe that," he said. "Not a bit of it. . . ."

Entering the room, he looked about uneasily for a few seconds. Then, saying nothing further, he took up the abandoned book and began to read hurriedly, as if in escape from his thoughts. She seated herself and watched him.

In the harsh glow of the electric light he looked younger than ever. Observing him, she began to feel a curious displeasure in this palpable evidence of youth, such an emotion as one might feel before a nameless, yet insurmountable, superiority.

At last, finding herself tortured with this new and strange uneasiness, she arose and left the room without a word.

## II

THE first months of their marriage had given some strength to her illusions. They were together every possible hour then. It thrilled her to find that he was proud of her; he was eager to exhibit



her to all his friends; they went out together very frequently.

She knew that she was still agreeable as a woman; the years had marked her much less than most of her acquaintances. In every artful manner she endeavored to enhance this measure of charm that remained to her: in the youthful piling up of her plentiful hair, in the simplicity of the dresses that her slender figure still permitted, in the adroit touches of rouge to her somewhat pallid cheeks, in the carefully penciled lines beneath her dark lashes.

Yet she understood, in a vague way, that the boy's pleasure in her was not aroused by her counterfeiting of youth, but by the very fact that she was older than most of the women whom he and his friends had known. It flattered him to demonstrate that he had qualities to interest a woman of her age. By turns this brought her pleasure and disquiet.

One morning, after he had left for the day, his parting words of a few minutes before came into her mind with the accompaniment of a sudden revelation. At the last moment he had told her not to wait dinner for him.

"I'll be at the office until ten or eleven this evening," he said.

In saying this he had fumbled with his hat and averted his eyes. Now she remembered that nervousness, and a cold suspicion chilled her like the utterance of a harsh sentence from beloved lips.

In another instant she denied the suspicion, but a certain realization persisted.

His old eagerness to be with her was fading!

She recalled that for nearly two weeks they had been nowhere together outside their home, not even in the simplicity of a walk through the streets. For more than a month they had not dined out in a restaurant.

As a corollary to this apprehension, she remembered certain criticisms of late. Once he had objected to a new method of arranging her hair.

"You look younger the other way," he had said.

Again, he had disliked a new frock.

"I think it makes you look too old," was his comment.

He was losing that early pride; he was beginning to feel the separation of her maturity.

The thought obsessed her through the day. With it returned her suspicions. The definiteness of her earlier denial became impossible.

Again and again a relentless, intuitive logic destroyed all efforts to ease her distress. Since he found her less and less agreeable, he must be turning to someone else. He was young! This characterization of him, this single word, youth, seemed to imply any possibility, any perfidy, any unfaithfulness.

A grim emotion, the kin of an obscure hate, entered her consciousness. A profound dislike of all that was young, of the word itself, smoldered in her emotions like a cold fire, charged with the potentiality of flame.

Toward evening the notion that he had lied to her became a conviction. At first she responded to it by the disarming knowledge of her helplessness. Nevertheless, this sort of conviction could never be a certainty without the definiteness of a sensual confirmation—she must see, she must hear his voice murmuring to that other person—that young person; impossible, of course. She would not know where to find him. But at any rate the lie could be proven to a certain measure. She could determine his absence from the office.

She ate no dinner at all. She waited implacably for enough time to pass for the accomplishment of her purpose. It would not do to go downtown too soon. Perhaps he would remain in his office until seven or eight o'clock. Perhaps that was the appointed place of meeting.

The notion that the unknown girl might be coming to him there—and so afford an opportunity for that entire proof of her first desire—now had no influence upon her action.

She shrank from any such meeting, from such a devastating positiveness of



proof. She still held to a frail hope, to the tenuous hope that even the demonstration of his empty office would leave her. He might be able to explain. In this hour, when by her own determination she threatened all the edifice of her dreams, she found her courage inadequate to a final, definitive gamble with her visions.

After eight o'clock she left the house. She took the car downtown, got off at last, and mingled with the crowds. The rush of people presented themselves in a new aspect.

At other times, with *him*, she had seen only smiling faces, the seekers of an evening's entertainment. Now, other countenances were apparent.

She perceived distracted eyes, drawn lips, women who passed alone and furtively, men who hurried with knitted brows. It seemed to her then that a multitudinous tragedy was abroad in life, moving like a universal presence, the symbol of life itself. The laughs of women, mingling with the noise of the streets, the bright eyes, the curved lips, were nothing save the immaterial foam of an implacable and fathomless reality, that like the sea would rise at last in a whelming wave, scattering this iridescence into nothingness.

She paused before a tall building and stood irresolutely in front of the doors.

At last she went in.

Two men were conversing in the lobby. The elevator cages were deserted, save for a single car, in which the operator sat stolidly. She approached him and entered. At other times she had been there in the evening, accompanied by her young lover, and he recognized her. He took her up without a question.

When she got out a sudden weakness kept her close to the iron grating for several seconds.

Now, with only a few steps to go, it seemed impossible to accomplish her purpose. An immense fear of the truth made her tremble softly. But at last she drew away and walked slowly down the corridor.

She came to the general offices first; they were dark. He, as secretary to the general manager, had a little cubic room of his own with a door opening upon the hall.

As she approached this she saw a band of light thrown over the tiled floor in front of her; a second later she was opposite the illuminated glass panel of his door.

She heard voices speaking within. First his own—and then that of another man. He had not lied; he was working. . . .

She returned home with exulting spirits. Later, when he arrived, she met him at the door with such an ardour of welcoming embraces that his own warmth flamed up; they stood just inside the hall, their arms closely entwined, like two who had found each other after some long and intolerable separation.

### III

For a few days something of their earlier relation returned to them. Accusing herself severely, Emily made herself believe that through the folly of her groundless fears alone she had pitched her emotions at an absurd tension. She should have known better. If the years she had lived had deprived her of youth's supreme assurance, at least she should have gained some common sense.

Her trouble, she reasoned, lay in her incapacity for faith, her lack of power to believe in good fortune. So now she tried to be assured.

This agreeable condition of her emotions persisted for a week or more—until her fears were shocked into being again by an alarming little incident that happened one evening as they emerged from a theater together.

It was not late; the entertainment had bored them and they thought it better to return home. They arose and made their way toward the exit.

Following him up the dim aisle, Emily had been full of content. They were going home, to be alone with each



other, to enjoy the communion of their undisturbed nearness. At the door she slipped her arm under his. They emerged to the street side by side.

At that moment a girl was crossing the lobby, walking diagonally toward the entrance. Emily had not observed her specifically, she was only one in the shifting mosaic of the street. Then the young man at Emily's side paused, almost stopped. She glanced up quickly at his face.

His eyes were upon the girl, and her own followed instantly. The girl caught his glance and she, too, paused.

Emily believed that her expression changed, that on the face of this stranger there came a look of recognition and an accompanying look of wonder. An instant later their progress across the lobby was resumed.

Not more than three or four seconds sufficed for the enactment of this incident.

But its significance to the woman was profound. Before they reached the sidewalk a sudden question passed her lips.

"Who was that?" she asked.

Coloured by no caressing inflection, her low voice was harsh.

For a moment he hesitated; it seemed to her he was on the point of pretending that she was not understood. But his answer admitted comprehension.

"I don't know," he said. "At first—" "What?"

"At first I thought she was an old acquaintance. A girl I knew at school. That I hadn't seen for a long time. That wasn't the case. But she made me stare for a second."

She offered no comment. She felt that his words were untrue, that he had divined her suspicion and was lying to her.

This was not a stranger, mistaken for a former friend, but someone whom he had met recently. She recalled the girl's expression—the almost indubitable look of surprise. Her suspicions were rapidly confirmed. He knew this girl, who saw him for the first time with

his wife. No doubt he was lying to her also.

The last thought brought no corollary of sympathetic pity for the girl. Her vividly remembered image came into the woman's mind with the effect of a maddening colour upon her sensibilities.

She saw the face with its rounded curves, the waves of fresh hair, the slim body abounding with the rhythm of youth; she saw her *youth*, all her abominable youngness! She hated her as now she hated everything that was young. The word was her opponent, looming more implacably up with every passing day. She withdrew her arm from the man at her side.

As they returned, he endeavoured several times to make her talk, but her answers were never more than monosyllables. She angered him at last; neither spoke; they came to their house and entered, sullen in their silence.

But indoors, alone with him, the sight of his compressed lips provoked her speech.

"There's no reason for you to be angry!" she exclaimed. "You might at least be sorry!"

He turned toward her, his eyes searching her face.

"I don't know what's the matter with you," he said. "I haven't an idea what you're talking about."

"Yes you have! You told me a lie! You knew her—that girl. . . ."

She paused, drew in a quick breath, and looked at him with angry eyes.

He stood before her, half angry himself and half astonished. His lips were slightly parted and their full curve made his face very young. This knowledge of his youth enraged her.

"Go out!" she exclaimed, her voice a subdued scream. "Go out and find her now! I don't want you, you little kid! Go out and find someone like yourself. I don't want to see you; I'm sick of you; go away!"

She took a step toward him, with her fingers pressed into two tense fists. An instant, and she had the impulse to beat them in his face. And then



this fury subsided; she stood trembling a second, her cheeks white, her eyes wide, like one who had just faced a spectre of horror.

Turning, she ran to the stairs, and breathlessly ascended in immediate flight.

Later she heard his step in the hall; she crept to the door and opening it upon him she threw herself into his arms, stopping whatever words were on his lips with the urgency of her passionate kisses.

#### IV

YET after this a certain new quality entered into their relation. It was as if her moment of blazing and accusing jealousy had stripped away a needed pretense, laying bare something fundamental, something that should have been hidden. There was between them now the looming possibility of disaster; her words had revealed it, and its ghostly presence moved between them in their most intimate hours.

The months passed; her mood was almost constantly one of depression. Yet she lacked any acute sensations. Her senses seemed dull, her mind seemed dull. They lived very much as before; they saw each other every day; they had even their instants of passion, but no white shaft of assured dreams stood up in their future. And more and more he stayed away from the house.

For a long time whatever suspicions she had merged without vitality into her general lethargy of spirit. In a way, she was afraid of any flaming suspicions. She feared to test them, she inwardly dreaded any attempt at their verification. To know the truth, by the evidence of her senses—what would she do then?

It was after the reading of a certain romantic book that her emotions stirred once more into vigour. The manner of their life was suddenly and cruelly luminous; it appalled her. Together, they were as the ghosts of their former selves, with every dream departed!

It seemed to her she could win him back, give him his former pride in her, establish her old allure. She bought new dresses, she painted her cheeks and lips again, she exercised a thousand feminine tricks; he was indifferent.

One night, when he turned carelessly, without even seeing, from the invitation of her lips, the hot anger of other days stirred in her blood like a maddening fluid. She held no doubt—there was someone else!

She determined on the certainty of proof. He had a frequent habit of going out after dinner, to walk alone for an hour or two. At last she began to follow him.

Half a square behind, keeping unobtrusively to the windows of stores or to the steps of houses, pressing close to walls, she watched him. She passed obliviously through crowds, only his form in her eyes. For a time she was without success.

But at last she made her discovery.

It was not, strangely enough, during one of the instances of her designed search, but came in a moment of accident. It happened early one afternoon.

She was downtown shopping. At the moment when she encountered him he was not even in her mind. She had just come out from a store, had taken a few steps along the crowded pavement—and they came face to face.

A young girl was holding his arm. His head was inclined to her face in an unmistakable attitude of affection.

This sudden sight of him, curiously enough, did not instantly chill her. Just in that moment she was elated; she felt the thrill of success, the end of a long search.

Then he saw her.

Their eyes met.

His cheeks reddened and his confusion gave her a sardonic pleasure.

"How do you do?" she said, and passed.

She saw him mechanically lift his hat, just as the sight of him went from her eyes.

Then an icy inflexibility possessed her senses. Her mouth hardened, her eyes



narrowed, and all the years of her life, the years that she had sought to cheat with her belated dreams, rushed to her face, making her old. Very firmly she walked to the corner and took the car.

At home she waited for him. She felt strong and a passionate purpose shaped itself in her mind.

Entirely patient, she waited through the slow hours; the afternoon passed at last; finally the door opened and she heard him enter the house.

Walking out into the hall she confronted him. His gaze dropped before her eyes.

She made a short, beckoning gesture, a gesture of command, and he followed her into the drawing-room.

She sat down and waited for him to seat himself in front of her. As if he obeyed the unspoken purpose of her will, he dropped into a chair.

"I suppose you love her very much!" she said.

He did not reply; he stared at the carpet and with one hand slowly twisted the edge of his coat.

"How long?" she asked.

Now he looked up at her and the light of a recent determination revealed itself in his steadied eyes.

"I don't suppose you will forgive me," he said.

"I won't," she answered.

"But maybe you will understand. Emily, perhaps you can . . . can be kind. . . ."

"What do you mean?"

"I made a mistake," he muttered.

She laughed: a harsh cachinnation that seemed to jangle in the air of that little room like some disharmonious instrument struck by sardonic hands.

"I understand that!" she exclaimed.

"With you—and me," he added.

She was silent.

Now his resolution took a fresh urge, and fixing his eyes upon her, he pleaded his case.

"I thought we could be happy," he

began. "I know we could have been. If only—if only I had been older. I came to feel some strange separation between us. I didn't understand it at first; I used to worry; I used to wonder. . . . It was because I was too young for you. Don't you see? Don't you understand? Then—I met her so naturally. . . ."

The woman before him was silent and his voice went on, rising and falling, taking on a passionate inflection, bathing her ears in a malignancy of sound. She looked at his face, his young face. And the hatred of his youth, of all youth, stirred her with an immovable resolve.

He was asking her to free him; he would give her the divorce; they could decide on the grounds.

"I didn't know," he pleaded. "I didn't see! I didn't understand, at my age, all that just being young demanded of me . . . ."

Still she was silent.

"I know you're kind," he said. "You'll say yes, won't you?"

He drew a little closer to her and his eyes, alive with hope, looked at her with the expectancy of their abominable youth. His opposing youth, the opponent of her dreams! She understood him, she comprehended what he dreamed. She saw all the glamorous romance he so dearly wanted from life.

She did not know how long she could be the avenging instrument of his torment, nor in what sudden tragic way he might free himself from the bonds of her devising, but she set herself implacably to the achievement of at least a day, a week, a year, of her requital.

She began to smile slowly.

He watched her with eagerness.

"You'll say yes, won't you?" he repeated. "You'll let me free?"

Still smiling, she softly spoke her imprisoning word.

"No," she said.





# Polychrome at Evening

*By Jean Allen*

AND now,  
Our last island day has ended.  
You must go from me,  
Across the space of lilac sea  
To the distant line  
Of indigo-violet land  
On the far horizon.

Tonight  
As we came down the hill  
To the beach,  
The ice blue sky  
Was filled with far-flung clouds  
Sailing, like full rigged galleons  
Before the wind,  
Towards the sunset's flaming heart.

Now,  
You will sail  
Into the deepening rose and blue,  
And I shall go back  
Alone  
Through the closing amethyst light.  
On the brow of the hill  
I shall sit,  
Midst the scent of bayberry  
And the southward sound of the surf,  
And watch your darkening sails  
Fade in the night.

Lonely, I shall be, perhaps,  
What matters it? . . .  
I have known peace,  
And had a dream come true.



WHAT makes a husband angry is not the fact of a man staring at his wife, but the fact that she enjoys it.



# Personally Conducted

By J. L. Morgan

**L**EE!" Charley Lee, slipping through the club grill, turned at the calling of his name and saw Mr. William Duncan sitting alone at a table in a dimly lit corner of the room.

"Come here!" Mr. Duncan beckoned with a show of hospitality. "Sit down and have a drink."

Mr. Lee glanced at the bottle of imitation beer in front of his friend and declined brusquely: "That stuff? Not on your life!"

"Well, sit down anyhow. I'm lonesome."

"Can't. I'm in a hurry," said Lee, endeavoring to conceal a cylindrical package under his arm in the folds of his raincoat. He bungled at this, a thing that did not escape Mr. Duncan's sharp eyes.

"Can't you sit down—just a minute?" There was an injured tone in Mr. Duncan's voice, and Lee sat down grudgingly.

"Well, not over a minute. I'm giving a little poker party out to my house tonight and I just dropped in to get a few bottles of charged water. I've got to hurry out."

"Is that all you came down for?" inquired Mr. Duncan, his eye on the raincoat.

Mr. Lee, somewhat confused, coughed.

"Well, not exactly," he admitted. "I'm taking out a bottle of Scotch, in case any of the boys wants a drink. My very last bottle."

Billy Duncan nodded sympathetically. "It's a pretty scarce article, Charley."

"You bet it is. I don't know what I am going to do after this is gone."

Familiar words were these to Duncan. He, too, belonged to "the-very-last-bottle" school, as did everyone in the club since the enforcement of the prohibitory law.

"Well, I got to be on my way," said Lee, rising from his chair.

"Wait a minute, Charley. Slip me one out of the bottle before you go."

Thwarted, Mr. Lee sat down again and somewhat reluctantly produced his bottle.

Duncan, corkscrew in hand, opened it expertly.

"Here, boy," ordered Lee, "bring a glass."

"Make it two," amended Duncan, assuming the role of host. "And some ice and a bottle of water."

"Damn the fellow's impudence!" thought Lee.

It was worse than useless to combat Billy Duncan. For Duncan had a way of accomplishing things. He was a "go-getter," and even now he was planning nothing less than the sequestration of Mr. Lee's bottle.

"A fine piece of goods, Charley—exceedingly fine," said Duncan, lowering his glass. "It's exquisite!"

"I should say that you are a good judge," observed Lee, a trifle pleased, though none the less diligent in driving the cork back into the bottle.

"Charley, what I wanted to see you about is this: There's going to be a big advance in a certain stock within the next few days, and I wanted to put you in—"

"Don't want to be in!" interrupted Lee, shaking his head. "Last month's cotton market cured me of speculation. I'm off for life!"



Mr. Duncan pondered. This was evidently a wrong lead. He tried another.

"Say, Charley, I got a rich piece of gossip for you. You'll bust your sides when you hear it."

He related a story concerning a fellow member.

The incident, somewhat old, was embellished with a few additional facts of Mr. Duncan's own invention and delivered in his best style—yet Mr. Lee's sides remained intact. He never even smiled.

"I heard all that a month ago," he said, looking at his watch. "Gee, it's nearly eight."

He rose to go, but Mr. Duncan laid upon him a detaining hand. "Just one more little snifter, Charley, and then I'm going to tell you something that'll make your eyes stick out a foot."

With extreme hesitation Lee once more produced the bottle and poured two scant drinks. And during this process Mr. Duncan racked his brain for the thing that would produce the desired effect on Mr. Lee's eyes—and his bottle.

Two attempts had failed signally.

There was no hope of holding his victim longer if the next failed, so upon this he concentrated a last despairing effort.

"For a long time, Charley," he said, slowly sipping his drink, "I didn't think I'd tell you. Fact is, I guess I was a little jealous, and—"

"Well, what is it?" demanded Lee impatiently. "Get to the point."

"It's about a woman—a very beautiful woman, Charley. And she wants to meet you."

For the first time Lee showed a sign of interest. He smiled and laid his glass on the table.

"On the level?"

Duncan, watching him narrowly, breathed a sigh of relief.

Here, at last, he had found the weak spot in Lee's armor.

"My sacred word," he vowed solemnly. "My Gawd, what a vision she is!" With these words Mr. Duncan

took the liberty of pouring out two more drinks.

"Charley, I think she's the handsomest creature that ever stepped in shoe-leather! And simply crazy to meet you. That's what made me—well, just a trifle sore. But I'm too good a friend of yours, Charley, to hold it against you. Why should I?"

"No reason at all," averred the owner of the Scotch. "But go on. Tell me about it."

"I'm going to do that very thing," said Mr. Duncan, calmly slipping Lee's bottle out from under his arm and placing it on the table between them. "That's why I have been waiting here to see you."

Now followed a most marvelous tale of a beautiful woman's infatuation. Omitting anachronisms, it showed a marked similarity to an episode in the life of Haroun al Raschid, a case, no doubt, of unconscious plagiarism.

It seemed, according to Mr. Duncan, that a certain young woman, a ravishing brunette from New Orleans, had beheld Mr. Lee at the theater, and so smitten was she with his masculine charms that she had made every effort to meet him. At last, through the good offices of her hostess, she had become acquainted with Mr. Duncan, and through him she hoped to meet her heart's desire.

Mr. Duncan admitted frankly his own attachment for the fair visitor, his desperate love-making and her indifference. Somewhat bitterly he added to this his personal estimate of the woman's mentality. Her choice seemed incomprehensible. He placed in parallel the symmetry of his own face and figure with those of his friend—much to the latter's disparagement. He gave the matter up as one of the inexplicable vagaries of the feminine mind; and he took another drink.

The conclusion of the narrative left Mr. Lee in a high state of impatience. His hair was getting thin and, although constantly in its quest, romance came to him all too infrequently. Now, his one



overpowering desire was to become acquainted with his conquest.

"When are you going to take me out, Billy?" he inquired anxiously.

Mr. Duncan surveyed the bottle. It was more than half full.

"It's got to be tonight," he said. "She's going away tomorrow."

"Here, boy!" summoned Lee. "Call these fellows up"—he rattled off a list of names—"and tell them the poker game's off. Tell them I'm sick—tell 'em anything."

He turned to Duncan.

"Well, I'm ready. Let's go."

"Not so fast, my young Lochinvar, not so fast," said Mr. Duncan, pouring himself a liberal libation. "Curious folk, these New Orleanians. They make a great ceremony of dinner—Sazarac cocktails, *bouillabaisse*, black coffee, and all that. It takes time. Rarely finish before ten. It would be unpardonable to arrive before they retire to the drawing-room. In fact—"

"Well, well!"

Mr. Lee turned in his chair and beheld Doc Clark and Henry Burke staring at him from the grill-room door.

"Say," called Clark, "I thought you were sick! How 'bout that poker game?"

Mr. Duncan noted pleasurably that the Doctor carried a cylindrical package under his arm. He welcomed them at once.

"Come on over, fellows," he said. "Come on over and have a little snort."

And with these words he placed Mr. Lee's bottle at their disposal.

Explanations by Mr. Duncan now followed. Again he plagiarized the tale from the Arabian Nights, in spite of Mr. Lee's protests; and with the second telling there were many new and thrilling embellishments—the result being that both the Doctor and Mr. Burke declared with enthusiasm their intention of joining the party.

Mr. Lee was visibly perturbed. He had pictured his presentation to the ravishing belle of New Orleans as the beginning of a beautiful romance, and he wanted no audience. Under the table

he kicked Mr. Duncan on the shins, but that individual merely moved his chair and proceeded in his calm, inflexible way.

Up to this time Mr. Duncan had allowed his imaginative brain to ramble at large. He had no purpose other than to possess the contents of Mr. Lee's bottle, and upon the completion thereof he had intended to abandon him at once and go home. But with the arrival of Doc Clark and his cylindrical package larger plans immediately suggested themselves. Clark must be held at all hazards.

Now Duncan had found, a couple of weeks previous, in the course of a night's adventuring by taxi, a roadhouse of thrilling possibilities. It was rather remotely located in the suburbs of the city, and he now remembered that he had become acquainted there with a number of interesting, if unconventional, women. Moreover, he recalled that some drinks had been surreptitiously served, and, all in all, he had had a most enjoyable evening. To this place, now, he resolved to take his friends—introduce the first attractive young woman he should meet as the girl from New Orleans, and let subsequent events take care of themselves.

After the second drink Doc Clark conceived a secret idea of stealing the belle of New Orleans from Lee, thereby unconsciously joining Mr. Burke in a purpose which he had from the outset. And in furthering this he produced his bottle, Lee's having become exhausted, and dedicated it to the pleasure of the evening. All hands now became impatient to set out on the adventure, and Mr. Duncan was forced to activity.

"I'd better call up first," he said, producing a small, red and rather soiled memorandum book in which was written some pages of telephone numbers, "and see if everything is all right."

This he proceeded to do. And it was while he was thus engaged that the party was further enlarged by the addition of Mr. Jim Webster and Mr. Sam Hooper.

These gentlemen, who had strolled



idly into the grill, had been immediately invited to join the expedition by Mr. Lee, who, somewhat stimulated, had experienced a change of heart and had thrown discretion to the winds. It was now his desire that all should witness the capitulation of the belle of New Orleans. He told of her great beauty, and, while Mr. Hooper and Mr. Webster nudged each other, of her madness for him—a thing, he assured them, not to be wondered at in the least.

Mr. Burke ordered a taxicab. It was a vehicle which he had used on numerous occasions and of which he spoke in the highest commendation.

"Listen," he said. "The chauffeur of this here boat is an ex-burglar by the name of Sweeney, and he can horn us in anywhere. And if it comes to a scrap he's there with a two-foot monkey-wrench. Some driver, I'm here to tell you!"

Mr. Sweeney's qualifications met universal approval and he was summoned.

Meantime, Mr. Duncan, who had made definite arrangements over the telephone, rejoined the party gleefully. He told them that by a fortunate coincidence the hostess, a widow, by the way, and a woman of great charm, was giving a party that evening to a number of her women friends, and that he and his party of gentlemen would be warmly welcomed.

A bellboy announced the arrival of Mr. Sweeney and his craft, and after a final drink around the party hurried outside to the waiting machine.

Here a difficulty confronted them. The piratical cab was designed to carry but four passengers. Six would laden it far below its Plimsoll line and necessitate an undue crowding. However, after some argument, the lightest of the passengers, Mr. Hooper and Mr. Lee, were taken on the laps of those in the back seat, and the expedition started.

## II

MR. DUNCAN, custodian of Doc Clark's bottle, passed it around and Mr. Webster broke into song—"A Life on

the Ocean Wave." This musical offering was of short duration, as it was changed after the first stanza to entreaties to Mr. Hooper "not to bear down so hard, especially going over the bumps."

Mr. Burke becoming likewise vexed at the angularity of Mr. Lee, reviled him unmercifully. At intervals he offered his burden to Duncan, who sat in the middle, and as often was he scorned and adjured to "be game!" The din of the ex-burglar's cab was deafening. It rattled in every joint and bearing, and above it all was the tubercular cough of an engine that was all but falling to pieces.

Far out in the environs of the city the machine, at Mr. Duncan's direction, turned off the macadam road into a rocky lane. Over this it bumped for several miles, accompanied by the vehement protests of Mr. Webster and Mr. Burke. It stopped suddenly, as did the lane, and Mr. Sweeney announced briefly that they were in the middle of a cornfield. There was nothing to do but back out and try again. This Sweeney did, relying on Mr. Duncan's orientation—with the net result that after some miles of rough journeying they arrived back in the identical spot in the cornfield.

Here another calamity befell them. The bottle, the panacea for all evils, became exhausted and they were confronted with the appalling horrors of thirst.

Their lack of foresight in not being properly provisioned engendered bitter wrangling among them, and Sweeney, after listening to them for a while, suggested that he might produce a bottle—for a consideration.

This was oil on troubled waters, but when the ex-burglar set his price they were staggered. Mr. Lee, confident in his hundred and twenty pounds of bone and brawn, announced his intention of whipping the profiteer then and there. Whereupon the ex-burglar pulled his two-foot monkey-wrench and awaited the attack with a calmness and confidence born of long experience. A com-



promise was effected, after considerable argument, and Sweeney laid aside his weapon and produced from the toolbox a square-necked bottle which he declared contained gin, "extra fine."

The new bottle had a peculiar tang. Indeed, connoisseurs all, they agreed with much profanity that they had never tasted anything like it.

"Sufferin' polecats!" gasped Mr. Hooper. "Some water—quick!"

Water, however, was a thing which they had neglected to provide, so Mr. Hooper was forced to cool his burning gullet by blasts of air from his lungs, the sounds emanating from him resembling with great fidelity the exhaust of a heavy mogul engine pulling a freight train up a steep grade.

The dearly purchased liquor did have a kick to it. They all agreed as to that afterward. It deadened all feeling in Mr. Webster's knees and, now unmindful of Mr. Hooper's weight, he again burst into song—a ballad narrating that he loved somebody as he had never loved before, all of which happened since first he met her on the village green.

These two lines comprised Mr. Hooper's entire knowledge of the ditty and he sang them over and over.

Once more they backed out of the cornfield and set sail for the house of the charming widow and the beautiful belle of New Orleans. They rode for miles while the meter fatefully ticked off the reckoning. Once they stopped while Sweeney examined the brakebands of the car. The odor of burning fabric was located; however, in Mr. Lee's hat, the same, and some of Mr. Lee's hair, being afire from Mr. Burke's cigar.

Some time later Mr. Duncan sighted a brilliantly lighted house set well back in the trees.

"Here's the place, boys!" he shouted. "At least I think it is," he amended, shutting one eye for better vision. "I'm almost sure it is."

They drove in.

The Doctor and Mr. Webster were asleep, but the stopping of the car woke

them and automatically they reached for the bottle.

"Now boys," admonished Mr. Duncan, "remember these girls are Bohemians and full of pep. Don't try to pull any highbrow stuff, but give 'em something quick and devilish from the jump."

"Hooray!" shouted Mr. Lee loudly. "That's the stuff!"

Sweeney, staring at the house, saw a curtain pulled aside and a face appear at a window.

"This is a new one on me, gents. Are you sure it's the right place?"

The guide, Mr. Duncan, was not sure. In fact, he was very dubious. Then as the rippling music of a piano floated through the night air all doubt vanished.

"Sure it is!" he said. "I remember now, it's the place with a piano."

### III

FOLLOWING him, they trooped up the steps.

He found the doorbell, eventually—one of the twisting kind—and on this he rang a loud and continuous jingle.

The door was opened almost immediately, and Mr. Duncan faced a very good-looking woman in evening attire.

"De-lighted! De-lighted!" he exclaimed. "Want you to meet some of my friends." He turned to the others. "Come on, fellows—this is the place, all right."

They clattered noisily in after him, the woman looking at them with something between a smile of welcome and a stare of astonishment.

"First," said Mr. Duncan in presenting Doc Clark, "I want you to meet good old Dr. Cook—the celebrated discoverer of the North Pole. Doctor Cook, Mrs. Pazazas."

"Higginson," she corrected.

Mr. Duncan smiled amiably.

"A rose would smell as sweet," he commented. "What's in a name between friends?"

Mr. Lee pushed himself forward and was duly presented.

"We have here," said the orator of



the evening, "Mr. Richard K. Snodfish, second assistant receiving teller of the Little Wonder Waffle Works—"

"My name's Lee," put in that individual indignantly. "Charles T. Lee."

"I regret to say Mr. Snodfish has been drinking," apologized Mr. Duncan. "He's not quite himself this evening as you will note by the hole in his hat."

Mr. Lee wrenched himself loose from his tormentor, and, seeing through the open door a handsome young woman whom he instantly recognized as the belle of New Orleans, approached and introduced himself.

"I am Mr. Lee," he said, "the gentleman you have desired to meet."

The startled look that appeared on the girl's face was succeeded by one of amusement.

"Indeed I have," she said, "most ardently. Now sit right down and tell me all about yourself."

Mr. Lee complied instantly.

He seated himself and began a long rambling story of his life in which he was the sole and only hero.

Mr. Webster waited for no introduction. Boldly following Lee into the drawing-room, he saw a fat woman in an extremely low-cut gown. There were several other ladies in the room, but here Mr. Webster at once made his selection. As he sat down beside her on the divan he reached for her hand, plunging immediately into what book-agents call a "hot canvas."

In the hall, Mr. Duncan was introducing Mr. Burke. He divulged the fact that this gentleman was none other than a Persian nobleman traveling incognito. The nobleman's mission was that of discovering and bringing back to his native land the night-blooming sassafras held sacred by certain of the hill tribes. On this theme Mr. Duncan expanded. The ex-burglar's gin was carburizing perfectly and, figuratively speaking, Mr. Duncan was hitting on all cylinders. In the middle of it he paused suddenly as he saw a man coming down the steps from the floor above.

The intruder was a tall, austere person with side-whiskers. There was

something vaguely familiar in the lean, grim face, and Duncan, in a labored attempt at recognition, placed a hand over one eye to dispel an annoying and persistent double vision. Then he knew.

The man was a fellow member of the Club, a Mr. Blodgett.

Blodgett, Duncan recalled, had belonged to the Club always. He was a singularly cold person, appearing invariably alone and speaking to no one. His very presence was irritating to most of the club members, for Mr. Blodgett carried with him at all times an air of frigid rectitude.

Now Duncan grinned as he realized that he had "something on" the frozen saint.

"Hello there, Blodgett!" he called, pointing an accusing finger. "What are you doing here?"

"I am here," replied Mr. Blodgett, looking at Duncan with eyes of ice, "for the very good reason that I live here."

Mr. Duncan was convulsed. "Well, that's rich! You live *here*? I never would have dreamed it!" He laughed uproariously. "You never can tell. It shows you're a human being, after all."

"This is my house, Mr. Duncan. The lady you have been talking to is my daughter. Come, I will introduce you to my wife."

He took Duncan by the hand and led him into the drawing-room.

Here a strange sight met their gaze. The fat woman was listening to Mr. Webster's bass rumble with horror-stricken, though fascinated, eyes. On the other side of the room, Mr. Lee was on his knees before a convulsed young woman, imploring her to marry him then and there. At her side sat Mr. Burke, whispering sweet nothings into her pink ear. The Doctor was at the piano, picking out chords and clamoring for a drink, and on a chair in the corner Mr. Hooper was snoring fitfully.

Blodgett's lean and ironic jaws snapped. "These are gentlemen I have invited to the party. They have, I may say, somewhat peculiar ideas of a joke. Yet we have enjoyed it—hugely. Now we will dance."



But Mr. Duncan, the truth finally penetrating his befuddled brain, was in no humor for dancing.

He walked across the room and kicked the snoring Mr. Hooper on the shins.

"Wake up!" he hissed. "We got in the wrong place."

"Come, gentlemen," urged the host, with a ghastly laugh, "on with the dance!"

Mr. Lee, sensing the situation, rose to his feet and fled, closely followed by Mr. Burke. Doc Clark was edging toward the door, dragging the protesting Mr. Hooper after him, while Duncan offered explanation.

"Sorry, but we can't stay," he said, gesturing wildly in the direction in which his friends had disappeared. "We just dropped in for a minute—to tell you we can't come. Fact is, important business engagements make it impossible"—he felt Mr. Blodgett's hand on his shoulder blades pushing him toward the door—"to attend. It's extremely unfortunate."

"We all regret it very much," said Mr. Blodgett smoothly, at the same

time applying more force on Mr. Duncan's shoulder blades. "The ladies will be greatly disappointed."

He followed them out on the veranda and closed the door behind him.

"Now," he said, whirling Duncan around, "get the hell out of here!"

And with this he let fly a kick that catapulted that gentleman into the others at the top of the steps, and they all went down together. After them Blodgett hurled with deadly accuracy a half-dozen flower-pots.

He gazed at his work of devastation for a moment and then, humming an air, he went inside.

\* \* \*

Doc Clark administered first aid, and, with Mr. Webster's assistance, got them loaded in the taxi. Sweeney, who had safely watched the massacre from a ring-side seat, cranked the car and they started back to the city.

They rode in silence for a time, and then Mr. Lee, rubbing his numerous bruises, spoke.

He said:

"To hell with the belle of New Orleans!"



## Shadow-Hour

By George O'Neil

THERE is so strange a stillness as you lie  
 Hushed in the darkness . . . and the lilies near,  
 Catching the moonlight in their curving hands,  
 Diffuse its pallor on your half-turned face . . .

There is no lift of air to move their scent . . .  
 They cloud about the casement, motionless . . .  
 And breathless as the lilies and the night,  
 Loving your shadowed peacefulness—am I . . .





# Garments

*By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff*

YOUTH is slipping from me . . .  
Like a golden garment a girl slips slowly from her cool body.

Daily I see the changes . . .  
Changes like the sky when autumn comes and twilight quickens suddenly.

There is silver in my hair . . .  
Hair that was tawny and shimmering like meadow grass stroked by sunlight.

My laughter no longer has the same ring . . .  
The old, girlhood ring that rippled before Sorrow stooped to me.

Nor is my body firm and supple . . .  
Supple as a lad's it used to be, and there was lustre in the flesh, and muscle.

Youth is slipping from me . . .  
Like a golden garment a girl slips slowly from her cool body. . . .



## Avaunt!

*By June Gibson and John Hamilton*

### I

I AM tiring of Paul . . .  
I shall hint to Paul that I wish to get married.

### II

I am tiring of Paula . . .  
I shall hint to Paula that I never intend to get married.





# Répétition Générale

By George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

## § 1

**T**HE *Land of the Dollar*.—Nothing could be more absurd than the almost universal European notion that Americans are a race of sordid money-grubbers, with no thought above the dollar. True enough, they do not positively disdain it, and fortune has made its pursuit relatively easy for them. Their land, with less labour, yields a greater usufruct than most other lands; they get more money for their labour; they jingle more coin in their pockets than any other people. But it is a grievous error to mistake that superior opulence for a sign of money-hunger, for they actually hold money very lightly, and spend it more lavishly than any other race of men, and with far less thought of values. The normal French family, I daresay, could live very comfortably for a week upon what the normal American family wastes in three days. There is, among Americans, not the slightest sign of the unanimous French habit of biting every franc, of calculating the cost of every luxury to five places of decimals, of utilizing every scrap of garbage, of sleeping with the bank-book under the pillow. Whatever is showy gets the American's dollars whether he needs it or not—even whether he can afford it or not. He is, so to speak, constantly on a bust, with his eyes alert for chances to get rid of his small change. He will buy anything that glitters.

The only genuinely thrifty people among us in the sense that a Frenchman, a Scotchman or an Italian is thrifty are the immigrants of the most

recent invasions. This is why they oust the native wherever the two come into conflict—say in New England and in the Middle West. They acquire, bit by bit, the best lands, the best stock, the best barns, not because they have the secret of making more money, but because they have the resolution to spend less. As soon as they become thoroughly Americanized they begin to show the national prodigality. The old folks wear home-made clothes and stick to the farm; the native-born children procure their garments from mail-order tailors and expose themselves in the chautauquas and at the great orgies of Calvinism and Wesleyanism. The old folks put every dollar they can wring from a reluctant environment into real property or the banks; the young folks dissipate their inheritance for phonographs, Fords, boiled shirts, yellow shoes, cuckoo clocks, lithographs of the current mountebanks, oil stock, automatic pianos, and the works of Harold Bell Wright, Gerald Stanley Lee and O. Henry. . . .

## § 2

*The American Credo, V.*—Additional leading theories and doctrines in the American credo:

1. That an American ambassador has the French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Japanese languages at his finger tips, and is chummy with royalty.

2. That the ready-made mail order blue serge suits for men are put together with mucilage, and turn green after they have been in the sunlight for a day or two.



3. That if a cat gets into a room where a baby is sleeping, the cat will suck the baby's breath and kill it.

4. That all men named Clarence, Claude or Percy are sissies.

5. That when a comedian, just before the rise of the curtain, is handed a telegram announcing the death of his mother or only child, he goes out on the stage and gives a more comic performance than ever.

6. That the lions in the cage which a lion-tamer enters are always sixty years old and have had all their teeth pulled.

7. That when a girl enters a hospital as a nurse, her primary object is to catch one of the doctors.

8. That the postmasters in small towns read all the postcards.

9. That a young girl ought to devote herself sedulously to her piano lessons since, when she is married, her playing will be a great comfort to her husband.

10. That all theater box-office employés are very impolite and hate to sell a prospective patron a ticket.

11. That all great men have had illegible signatures.

12. That all iron-moulders and steam-fitters get drunk on Saturday nights.

13. That if a man takes a cold bath regularly every morning of his life, he will never be ill.

14. That ginger snaps are made of the sweepings of the floor in the bakery.

15. That every circus clown's heart is breaking for one reason or another.

16. That all circus people are very pure and lead domestic lives.

17. That if a spark hits a celluloid collar, the collar will explode.

18. That when a bachelor who has hated children for twenty years gets married and discovers he is about to become a father, he is delighted.

19. That drinking three drinks of whiskey a day will prevent pneumonia.

20. That every negro who went to France with the army had a liaison with a white woman and won't look at a nigger wench any more.

21. That an oyster-opener every three weeks or so discovers a pearl

which he sells to a jeweler for five hundred dollars.

22. That the philoprogenitive instinct in rabbits is so intense that the alliance of two normally assiduous rabbits is productive of 265 offspring in one year.

23. That all excursion boats are so old that if they ran into a drifting beer-keg they would sink.

24. That an intelligent prize-fighter always triumphs over an ignorant prize-fighter, however superior the latter in agility and strength.

25. That a doctor's family never gets sick.

26. That all Japanese are very sagacious in a sly way.

27. That Conan Doyle would have made a wonderful detective.

28. That a man with two shots of cocaine in him can lick Jack Dempsey.

29. That if a woman about to become a mother plays the piano for an hour every day, her baby will be born a Beethoven.

30. That a doctor knows so much about women that he can't fall in love with one of them.

31. That every country girl who falls has been seduced by a man from the city.

32. That all Chinamen smoke opium.

33. That a sepia photograph of the Coliseum, framed, is a work of art.

34. That the Siamese Twins were joined together by gutta percha moulded and painted to look like a shoulder-blade.

35. That every time one crosses the English Channel one encounters rough weather and is very sea-sick.

36. That all prize-fighters have their hair cut round in the back.

37. That a man of fifty-five is always more experienced than a man of thirty-five.

38. That a man will do anything for the woman he loves.

39. That when one takes one's best girl to see the monkeys in the Zoo, the monkeys invariably do something that is very embarrassing.

40. That if one has only three matches left, the first two will invari-



ably go out, but that the third and last will remain lighted.

41. That a woman with a  $7\frac{1}{2}$ -C foot always tries to squeeze it into a  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -A shoe.

42. That no shop girl ever reads anything but Laura Jean Libby and the cheap sex magazines.

43. That there is something peculiar about a man who wears a red tie.

44. That all Bolsheviki and Anarchists have whiskers.

45. That Captain Richmond Pearson Hobson was an exceptionally succulent kisser.

46. That all Russians have unpronounceable names.

47. That awnings keep rooms cool.

48. That it is very difficult to decipher a railroad time-table.

49. That gamblers may always be identified by their habit of wearing large diamonds.

50. That when a man embarks in a canoe with a girl, the chances are two to one that the girl will move around when the boat is in mid-stream and upset it.

51. That German babies are brought up on beer in place of milk.

52. That oil of pennyroyal will drive away mosquitos.

53. That the old ladies on summer hotel verandas devote themselves entirely to the discussion of scandals.

54. That a bachelor, expecting a feminine visitor, by way of subtle preliminary strategy smells up his rooms with Japanese punk.

55. That all one has to do to gather a large crowd in New York is to stand on a curb a few moments and gaze intently at the sky.

56. That one can get an excellent bottle of wine in France for a franc.

57. That it is dangerous to drink out of a garden hose since if one does one is likely to swallow a snake.

(To be continued.)

§ 3

*The Waste of Names.*—It was Richard Le Gallienne, I believe, who once

observed with regret that so many available euphonious and charming Christian names for men and women have been wasted on diseases. For example, where a more agreeable sound than that conveyed by the name Cattarrh Carter or Diabetes White. Assuredly no current nomenclature is so soothing to the ear. Erysipelas is a prettier name than Alice or Mabel or Grace, surely; just as Tonsilitis is a smarter name than George or Henry or even Montgomery. Which is the more mellifluous: Clara Jones or Pneumonia Jones, Gustave Smith or Appendicitis Smith? Which the more musical: Susan Jackson or Diphtheria Jackson, Samuel Robinson or Gout Robinson?

§ 4

*The National Letters.*—The greatest defect of American literature, as of American journalism, lies in the fact that it is chiefly produced by bounders. To this extent it is genuinely democratic: its personnel is recruited from the lowest orders. Hence its almost unbroken conventionality, its hostility to ideas, its lack of truth, its heavy moralizing. Moral certainty always goes with inferiority. The man who believes that he knows absolutely what is right and what is wrong is commonly a man who sleeps in his underclothes, and if he doesn't himself, then you may be sure that his father did.

Imagination is a function of skepticism, and skepticism is a function of superior information. The more a man knows, the less he believes. A great literature is the product of the reaction of intelligence against the prevailing stupidities of a race. In America nine-tenths of current literature is a product of the reaction of stupidity against intelligence. Shakespeare, at a time of rising democratic feeling in England, flung the whole force of his genius against democracy. Cervantes, at a time when all Spain was romantic, made a headlong attack upon romance. Goethe, with Germany groping toward nationalism, threw his influence on the side of internationalism. But in Amer-



ica all save a pitifully small minority of writers are eager conformists. In Elizabethan England they would have bawled for democracy, in the Spain of Cervantes they would have slobbered for chivalry, and in the Germany of Goethe they would have wept and beat their breasts for the Fatherland.

## § 5

*Billets Doux.*—Whatever the proficiency of the Americano in other and lesser fields of enterprise, it is an acknowledged fact that in the art of writing the love letter he is a lugubrious doodle. The love letter written by the Don Juan of the United States—and I speak not of the amateur, but of the comparative crack shot—is as inefficient as a trombone player with tuberculosis. It may succeed—as it does succeed—in snaring a quarry of shop-girls, upper West Side widows, Vassar left-overs, pie-faced débutantes and other such already eager, willing and easily grabable sparrows, but it is seldom, if ever, that it contrives to wing a genuine canary. Nine-tenths of the most desirable young American women marry foreigners — Englishmen, Frenchmen, Italians, etc.—not because the latter are more handsome bipeds than the American (they are generally not so pulchritudinous), or because they are wealthier (they seldom have nearly so much money), but because they excel the American in the arts of amour, and, more particularly, in the important technical art of the love letter. The American girl who can resist the drive of the love letter of an Englishman can resist the drive of a magnum of champagne. The American girl who can resist that of the love letter of a Frenchman can resist a gallon of whiskey. The American girl who can politely retain her balance after reading the love letter of an Italian can walk a chalk line after inhaling a keg or two.

The Latin understands the great secret of the *billet doux*. Where the American—and not infrequently the Englishman—writes his love letter

from the point of view of the time when he composes it, the Latin always writes his from the point of view of the time when his inamorata will receive it. Thus, the Anglo-Saxon writing his beloved at eleven in the morning, writes an eleven a.m. point of view letter. And, thus, the beloved in due time receiving the letter at twilight or eventide or late night, and finding herself in the twilight or eventide or late night mood, coincidentally finds the eleven a.m. point of view letter as jarring as a 1904 model Peerless and approximately as persuasive as a locomotive whistle.

The Latin never commits this mistake. His love letter is ever devised and composed, not from the time of its mailing, but from the time of its receipt. He figures as closely as he can the hour at which his girl will get the letter, and he writes the letter with that hour, and the girl's associated mood, in mind. It is a strategical technique that no woman, black or white, can withstand. In every such letter there is mailed synchronously, for the convenient use of the girl addressed, a white flag.

## § 6

*This 98.6 Fever.*—The notion that the life of the whole universe centers in the life of man—that human existence is the supreme expression of the cosmic existence—this notion seems to be hurriedly on its way toward the hell-box of exploded ideas. The fact is that the life of man, as it is more and more carefully examined, appears to be more and more empty of significance. Once apparently the chief concern and masterpiece of the gods, it now begins to bear the aspect of an accidental by-product of their vast and inscrutable operations. A blacksmith making a horse-shoe produces something almost as brilliant, arresting and mysterious—the shower of sparks. But his eyes and thought, as we know, are not on the sparks, but on the horse-shoe.

The sparks indeed, constitute a sort of disease of the horse-shoe; their existence depends upon a wasting of its tissue. In the same way, no doubt, man



is a disease of the cosmos—a kind of pestiferous eczema or barber's itch. There are, of course, different grades of eczema—and so are there different grades of men. No doubt a cosmos afflicted with nothing worse than an infection of Beethovens, Galileos or Shakespeares would not think it worth while to send for the doctor. But a cosmos infested by prohibitionists, chautauqua orators, Socialists, stock-brokers and moving-picture actors must suffer damnably. No wonder the sun is so hot and the moon is so diabetically green.

§ 7

*Woman's Function.*—Woman's function in social and cardiac enterprise is, primarily, as an audience. A man admires a woman not for what she says, but for what she listens to. The more attentively and sympathetically she remains silent before his oracular non-senses, the more beautiful she seems to him, and the more he loves her, and the sooner he marries her. The girl with the patient ear-drum is the girl who first nabs a husband.

§ 8

*On Men.*—There are two distinct types of men. All men may be set down as of the one type or the other. Men are either cheap men or they are not cheap men. The classification has little to do with birth, with family, with education or social position or wealth. But each man nonetheless wears a tag conspicuous, revelatory and unmistakable. A man is either an essential gentleman or an essential bounder. I know a man born of one of the blue-blood American families, educated at a great university, rich and conspicuous in the smart metropolitan life, whose soul is the soul of a bounder. I know a cigar dealer in Broadway, an old man born God knows where and without education or fortune, who has the soul of a gentleman. I know men high in affairs, high in society, high in the estimation of the country, who are

muckers; I know a seedy middle-aged man who makes keys to fit my doors, my humidior and my ice-box for fifty cents apiece who has something of the purple in his heart.

A man may be red or yellow or black or white, he may be high or low or rich or poor, but he bears the one brand or the other. Pause a moment and consider the men you know intimately. They drop, one by one, into the one groove or the other as surely, and as relentlessly, as the balls in so many Japanese rolling games.

§ 9

*A Needed Book.*—Some time ago, confronted by an ethical problem that left me hesitating, I consulted the principal text-books of ethics for guidance. Not one of them gave me any practical help. All of them dealt with the problem, at least in essence, but all of them dealt with it in a purely theoretical and useless way. They told me what an archangel might conceivably do in such a case, and hence what a man *ought* to do, but the thing I was seeking was not perfectionist advice but practical advice—what I wanted to find out was what the normal man *would* do. In other words, I wasn't trying to set a new record for virtue; I was merely trying to live up to the average record.

This practical ethic, so far as I know, has never been put into a book. All the texts I have read are hortatory; they preach a degree of rectitude that is obviously beyond such commonplace scoundrels as you and me. They seem to be grounded upon the theory that every man yearns to become a Sunday-school superintendent, whereas the truth is that all he wants is to be ordinarily decent, according to the lights of his time and race, and to be accepted as ordinarily decent by his fellow-men. The books of ethics prohibit hundreds of things that all of us do every day without the slightest twinge of conscience. Any man who tried to follow their directions would be set down an



idiot. But I suspect that not even their authors ever actually try.

Why doesn't some one write a genuinely practical book? It would be enormously useful to young men, who frequently get into trouble by violating the esoteric code in all innocence. It would be of almost equal utility to us older fellows, for every now and then we confront a moral emergency that is quite beyond the bounds of our past experience. If I had the time I'd try to compile such a book. But other concerns engross me, and so I pass on the suggestion. Let us have it done, not by some academic theorist, but by a practical man. There are too many books of ethical theory already.

#### § 10

*Add Standard Dictionary.*—Dog: A morris chair for fleas.

#### § 11

*The Dream of Peace.*—The current argument in favor of this or that scheme for the abolition of war is largely based upon the fact that men have long since abandoned the appeal to arms in their private disputes and submitted themselves to the jurisdiction of courts. Starting from this fact, it is contended that disputes between nations should be settled in the same manner, and that the adoption of the reform would greatly promote the happiness of the world.

Unluckily, the proponents of the argument overlook something. What they overlook is the circumstance that the courts of justice now in existence do not actually dispense justice at all, but only law, and that this law is frequently in direct conflict, not only with what at least one of the two litigants honestly believes to be his rights, but also with what he believes to be his honour. The normal litigation in the courts does not end with both litigants satisfied. It ends with at least one of them, and often with both of them, as sore as a flogged sophomore, and full of a deter-

mination to get even with the judge at the next election.

In disputes between man and man this dissatisfaction, of course, is not of serious consequence. The aggrieved party, for all his bawling, is usually too weak to attempt the revenge he contemplates; unless he is very rich or has extraordinary political influence the learned judge can afford to laugh at him and even to kick him out of the hall of justice. If, being poor and weak, he ventured to denounce the judge as a scoundrel in open court or to heave a cuspidor at the district attorney or the jury, the whole strength of the unbiased masses of men would be exerted to destroy him, for those unbiased men all believe (as long as they are not litigants themselves) that it is far better to put up with a great deal of injustice than to have plaintiff and defendant slanging and bombarding each other on the public street, to the discomfort of everyone else.

This same notion lies behind the current campaign against war, but it is unsupported, unluckily, by the same overwhelming force. The average private litigant cannot hope to prevail against the whole of society, nor even against the small society of his city or village. But in disputes between nations there is no such colossal disproportion between the strength of the individual litigant and the strength of society in general. It often happens, indeed, that a litigant is so powerful that he is encouraged to defy all the powers that stand against him. The Germans did it very lately, and came within an ace of succeeding; the English might do it tomorrow, and have the chances in their favour at least 3 to 2. It is precisely as if a private litigant, with the judgment against him, had a fair chance of getting it reversed by slugging the judge. Nine litigants out of ten, it must be obvious, would open upon His Honor instantly. And the tenth would do it the moment he thought the crowd was with him.

Thus the international police court, if it is ever set up, will have hard sled-



ding, and the learned justices will probably have to sit in heavily-armoured conning-towers, with plenty of Red Cross nurses in attendance. For what they will dispense, remember, will be law, not justice. If they could ladle out actual justice it might be different, for justice sometimes contents even the loser; his finer feelings conquer his selfishness. But never law. The mildest man, when the law bites him, yells for its repeal; the average man denounces all its agents and catchpolls as scoundrels. Now imagine these agents and catchpolls the nominees, at least in part, of his opponent! Imagine it impossible to obtain absolutely unbiased judges without appointing Hottentots who can neither read nor write!

§ 12

*The Girl and the Church.*—A girl should go to church regularly. To a ritualistic, not an evangelical church, however. The adventure softens her, makes her lovelier, makes her more charming. A girl leaving St. Patrick's is twice as lovely as when she enters. There is a charming wonder in her eyes, a new sweetness and music in her soul. The ritualistic church takes the hardness out of a girl's eyes and heart: it perfumes her with a touch of spirituality that is pleasing to men. The evangelical church, to the contrary, turns her into a sour-ball, a woman with the flash of acid in her eyes and the set of a bear-trap to her teeth. But the other church! What man can resist the allure of a woman who has knelt before high, candle-lit altars with the rays of dying suns falling upon her from stained-glass? What man can fail to love a woman who has listened, hushed, for many years to great organs and to soft and rhythmical Latin prayers, and has knelt at vespers in great, dim, majestic cathedrals? Let the dog step up!

§ 13

*On Health.*—What we mean by health is a state or condition in which

the organism finds itself so delicately adapted to its environment that it is unconscious of irritation. Such a state, in any organism above the simplest, is necessarily transient; the life of such an organism is so tremendously complex a series of reactions that it is almost impossible to imagine all of them going on without friction. The earth-worm has few diseases and is seldom ill; when he gets out of order at all it is usually a serious matter, and he dies forthwith. But man, being well-nigh infinitely complicated, gets out of order in a hundred thousand minor ways, and is always ailing more or less.

Perfect health, indeed, might almost be called a function of inferiority. Within the fold of the human race it is possible only to the lowest orders. A professionally healthy man, *e.g.*, an acrobat, an athlete or an ice-wagon driver, is invariably an ass. In the Greece of the great days the athletes we hear so much about were very few in number, and most of them were imported barbarians. Not one of the eminent philosophers, poets or statesmen of Greece was a good high-jumper. Nearly all of them, in fact, had flabby muscles and bad stomachs, as you will quickly discern by examining their writings. The æsthetic impulse, like the thirst for truth, might almost be called a disease. It never appears in a perfectly healthy man.

§ 14

*The Sympathetic Ear.*—There are two times in a man's life when he particularly needs the ear of a friend: (1) when he has just lost his old girl, and (2) when he has just got a new one.

§ 15

*Great Moments from Rotten Plays.*—For many years, Miss Amelia Bingham has presented in vaudeville an act called "Great Moments from Great Plays," the act being made up of the six big scenes from as many classical



dramas. Somewhat more piquant, it occurs to me, would be the great moments from the world's worst plays; and these great moments I shall therefore present, month by month, in this department.

## I

*The Great Moment from "In the Shadow of The Rockies", a Romance of the Golden West in Three Acts," by Frank H. Bernard, author of "Silas, The Chore Boy," etc., etc.*

Gray: What are you doing here?

Dalton: That is my business! (*Trying to hide bag.*)

Gray: What's that you are hiding?

Dalton: Out of me way! (*Stepping forward.*)

Gray: So you are the thief who comes in the night to steal away another's rights! Give me that bag!

Dalton: Let me pass I say, or by Heaven I'll—

Gray: No, you won't!

(*Gray grasps Dalton around the body pinioning his arms to his side. They struggle back and forth for a few moments when Dalton manages to break Gray's hold and strikes him to the floor—he then rushes up and off L.C.—At the same time, Bud the Mascot's face, disappears from the window, and Chip Gordon, the angel of Golden Gulch, Seth Thompson, Postmaster of Red Dog, Jim Gordon, a Forty-niner, and Henrietta, the new school-teacher, enter from R2 in an excited manner.*)

Chip: What's up? (*Sees Gray on floor.*) Anything wrong, Mr. Gray?

Gray: The gold! The gold!

Gordon: What gold?

Gray (*rising with Chip's assistance*): The bag of dust you had! He has stolen it!

Thompson: Who has stolen it?

Gray: Jake Dalton!

Gordon: Jake Dalton! (*Crosses to fireplace and looks*). Yes! It is gone! Damn him!

(*At this moment Bud enters through door L.C. with the bag in his hand.*)

Bud: Yare it is! Yare it is! I done tripped him up an' snatched it out 'en his hand! (*Gives bag to Gordon.*)

Gordon: Thank God you war in time! Dalton (*appearing in door L.C., knife in hand*): Give me that, you black devil, or I'll—

Chip (*covering Dalton with her revolver*): Stand whar yar are, Jake Dalton, or I'll shove daylight clean through yah!

(*Dalton falls back surprised—Bud falls on his knees at Gordon's side—Thompson in attitude of rushing at Dalton, but restrained by Henrietta grasping him by arm—Chip holding Dalton at bay with her revolver.*)

(*Quick curtain.*)

## § 16

*Honour.*—It is a commonplace of moral science that absolute morality is impossible—in other words, that all men sin. What is often overlooked is that the same fallibility shows itself upon the higher level of what is called honour, which is simply the morality of superior men. A man who views himself as honourable usually labours under the delusion that his honour is unsullied, but this is never literally true. Every man, however honourable, occasionally sacrifices honour to mere morality behind the door, just as every man of morals occasionally sacrifices morality to self-interest.

## § 17

*Lyric.*—That portion of a song which causes everyone in the audience to remark: "I wonder why she doesn't have her catarrh treated?"

## § 18

*The True Immortal.*—If, in the course of long years, the great masses of the plain people gradually lose their old faiths, it is only to fill the gaps with new faiths that restate the old ones in new terms. Nothing, in fact, could be more commonplace than the observa-



tion that the crazes which periodically ravage the proletariat are, in the main, no more than distorted echoes of delusions cherished centuries ago. The fundamental religious ideas of the lower orders of Christendom have not changed materially in two thousand years, and they were old when they were first borrowed from the heathen of Asia Minor and Northern Africa. The Iowa Methodist of today, imagining him able to understand them at all, would be able to accept the tenets of Augustine without changing more than a few accents and punctuation marks. Every Sunday his raucous ecclesiastics batter his ears with diluted and debased filches from *De Civitate Dei*, and almost every article of his practical ethics may be found clearly stated in the eminent bishop's Ninety-third Epistle.

And so in politics. The Bolsheviki of today not only poll-parrot the balderdash of the French demagogues of 1789; they also mouth what was gospel to every *bête blonde* in the Teutonic forests of the fifth century. Truth shifts and changes like a cataract of diamonds; its aspect is never precisely the same at two successive instants. But error flows down the channel of history like some great stream of lava or infinitely lethargic glacier. It is the one relatively fixed thing in a world of chaos. It is, perhaps, the one thing that gives human society the stability needed to save it from the wreck that ever menaces. Without their dreams men would have fallen up and devoured one another long ago—and yet every dream is an illusion, and every illusion is a falsehood.



## One Wife

By *Theodosia Garrison*

SHE knows the length of Hell,  
The space between  
The bland clock ticking on the mantel there,  
And the window screen.

She knows the look of Hell,  
The empty street  
That holds no form, no shadow and no sound  
Of stumbling feet.

She knows the light of Hell,  
The first gray dawn  
That tells the fading lamp, the dying hope  
That night has gone.



THERE'S many an elderly man with a young looking figure who would not want his wife to see him with it.



# The Smile of Fortune

By Dennison Varr

SHE was always a lucky person. Put her in the most difficult scrape imaginable and she would emerge through some freak of chance. On one occasion she was down to her last dollar, with no hope of any relief in the immediate future. Yet her luck brought her out of the dilemma neatly. She had the good fortune to find a diamond pendant. She found it on a jewelry counter.



## Memory Song

By Rosalind Schwab

OH, he has wed, and I have wed,  
And I have children three.  
My love for him has long been dead,  
Like that he bore to me.  
*But once my heart, at his approach  
Beat, oh, so rapidly!*

My little ones and my good man—  
To them I'm leal and true.  
For their good cheer I work and plan  
As is my lot to do.  
*Once, when my fingers lay in his,  
What thrilling joy I knew!*

'Tis many years and many miles  
That roll betwixt us twain.  
I have forgot my maiden wiles,—  
He'd scarce know me again.  
*And once I thought, to sunder us  
E'en Death would seek in vain!*





# Philosophers

A Satirical Play in One Act

By Morris Colman

CHARACTERS:

BENNETT—*A Man of Thirty*

CARNEY—*A Man of Fifty*

LUCY—*A Woman of Thirty*

**B**EFORE you is the backyard of an apartment house in a large city. It is late summer. The time is three o'clock in the morning. On the left you notice dimly a corner of the rear of the block. It is in antique finish. From the corner runs a dilapidated board fence, forming the second side of a triangular space. You view it from the hypotenuse. In the foreground lays an indistinct confused mess of broken barrels, packing cases, pieces of wood, aged tin cans and everything which forms the *mise en scene* of the modern tenement rear.

Bluish light is the illuminant, with amber moonlight from the right casting greenish highlights, in contrast with the deep tone of the shadows.

As the curtain rises, BENNETT may be noticed, seated on a packing case in the middle of the litter, back to the house. He is clean shaven, black haired, carelessly dressed, hatless. In his hands is a nickel-plated revolver, which he is fingering.

He looks intently at the revolver, then at the skyline. He takes a deep breath, but without emotion. He pulls out a watch, looks at it, replaces it in his pocket, whistles a few bars from some opera.

CARNEY enters through a gap in the fence. In the weak light he is seen to have grey hair and mustache, and an apparently deeply wrinkled face. He wears old and patched garments. He is carrying a rough sack. He does not notice BENNETT at first. This person is looking at him with curiosity. CARNEY stoops, picks up an empty whiskey bottle, which he drops into the sack. He has turned and almost faces BENNETT when he notices him.

CARNEY immediately drops his bag, and stands as though paralyzed for a moment.

BENNETT

What's the matter?

CARNEY

That gun!

CARNEY

(Regaining his composure.) Look out!

BENNETT

(Still calmly.) Oh, the gun! You needn't worry. It's just to kill myself.

BENNETT

What for?

CARNEY

Good God, what for? You had me



scared. (*He takes off his hat, which drops out of his trembling hands to the ground. He draws out a handkerchief and wipes his brow. He does not pick up the hat.*)

BENNETT

(*Just as calmly.*) I'm going to kill myself because truth is so ugly.

CARNEY

Because *what*?

BENNETT

(*Gazing abstractedly ahead.*) Because nothing is beautiful but what is false, and reality is too insistent for me to escape it.

CARNEY

What's all this? Are you crazy?

BENNETT

I never was more rational in my life.

CARNEY

You said you were going to kill yourself.

BENNETT

(*Nonchalantly.*) Well?

CARNEY

(*Draws up a packing-case and sits down, facing BENNETT.*) But you must not think of such a thing. It's sin.

BENNETT

It's sin, eh? What is sin?

CARNEY

You know very well what sin is. Sin is anything wrong.

BENNETT

Well, there's nothing wrong about this, is there?

CARNEY

Wrong? Young man, it's criminal. It is an insult to your Maker, it's loathsome, it's contemptible, it's cowardly. . . . I wish I had words to tell you how I feel about it.

BENNETT

You do? You're assuming a lot, are you not? What right have you to say

all this? I tell you your term sin is too relative. Sin is anything fifty-one per cent of the people would like to do but don't dare do. I can do what I like with my own, and you can go to hell! (*Calming suddenly.*) You see the night? It is beautiful. (*With a sweeping gesture, revolver in hand, he indicates the sky.*) Why is it beautiful?

CARNEY

(*Contemplates the sky from horizon to horizon, then speaks.*) Yes, it is beautiful. I had not noticed it. It is one of God's most magnificent works. . . .

BENNETT

(*Interrupting.*) God? I'll tell you why the night is beautiful. It is beautiful because it hides. It covers up the ugly details. It deceives. It does not show up the truth. You see endless semi-darkness, filled with indistinct figures which charm because you do not know what they are. All the homeliness is shadowed over. That is what makes it magnificent.

CARNEY

(*Still distressed at the thought of BENNETT's contemplated demise.*) But, in God's name, what has the night to do with your killing yourself?

BENNETT

(*With nonchalance.*) Because as soon as dawn comes, just before it is light enough for reality, I'm going to blow out my brains.

CARNEY

But why, my friend?

BENNETT

I told you once. Because there is so little beauty in the world that I cannot be happy.

CARNEY

A coward, eh?

BENNETT

(*Smiling.*) If you call going from a place one dislikes to another more agreeable cowardice, yes.



CARNEY

It is a pretty cheap way to win a battle.

BENNETT

No. It is a luxury few men can afford.

CARNEY

And you are running away from what?

BENNETT

Everything. It is so terribly ugly.

CARNEY

(*Leaning back, hands on knees, speaking gently.*) Come now, young man, don't be foolish. There is much in life that is beautiful. I'm old enough to be your father. I believe in God and earn my modest living, and I am happy.

BENNETT

(*With a pitying smile.*) You are happy because you believe a myth. If I could believe it, I would be happy also.

CARNEY

(*Almost shouting.*) Myth?

BENNETT

Yes. That is why it is a good religion.

CARNEY

(*Open-mouthed.*) I don't understand you.

BENNETT

Religion was not made because men needed something to worship, but because the rabble is ready to believe anything someone apparently better informed tells it. Men are frightened by reality, and crave something to believe which will convince them there is more to life than they see. Those who were capable of thinking provided this, called it religion and declared themselves inspired, and secured an easy living for themselves.

CARNEY

But Christianity, at least, is truth.

BENNETT

It would never do for the common people to know the truth. They are too sentimental. Those who founded religions play on men's fears, on their responsiveness to impressions, on their loves. That is how they preserve law and order, maintain the upper hand, and make themselves wealthy. Religions are the proof of the masses' subjection to the small aristocracy of the intelligent. Why, I tell you, if the mass could reason—if ever it learned the truth—everyone would seek dreams in drugs, carelessness in cups and newness in forgetting—then do what I am going to do—get out of the world.

CARNEY

(*Who has been nonplussed temporarily by this heresy.*) My dear friend, you do not understand. Your heart is blinded to God's truth. The Lord giveth happiness to him who hath faith. Whatever your hardships in this life, we know there will be happiness in the hereafter. Faith is the great comforter.

BENNETT

I am sorry you came. A man's illusions are his only happiness, and he is the only damned who shatters them, for once shattered, they can never be reinstalled.

CARNEY

You can never shake my faith with your heresies.

BENNETT

(*Warming to the discussion.*) Faith! Faith is that with which you deceive yourself. It is the premise of every religion and the mark of servitude to the intelligent. You are proving my own argument. Without faith you could not be happy. And the man who thinks cannot believe.

CARNEY

By faith men can move mountains.

BENNETT

Yes, and history tells us that by faith men killed others who had faith enough



to believe they were being killed to their own glory. And those who engendered this faith laughed. (*Vehemently.*) Faith! The most beautiful attribute of the child, the most pitiful admission of the man. The greatest blessing and the greatest curse, the most potent weapon in the world! If only I could use it! But the trouble would be I could not stand the sight of its slaves.

CARNEY

(*Shaking his head.*) My boy, my boy, take care. You are speaking of something of which you know nothing. If you refuse faith, no heavenly power can help you.

BENNETT

(*With a sneer.*) Heavenly power! (*LUCY enters. She emerges from a back door of the tenement-house. She is a woman of no particular allure, but from what one can see in the semi-darkness, not ugly. She appears to be a hard-working woman. She is dressed for the street, and is on her way to the business section of the city, where she scrubs out offices before their occupants arrive each morning. BENNETT and CARNEY do not notice her arrival. As she walks toward the back of the yard she notices them. Then she catches sight of the revolver in BENNETT'S hands. She screams.*)

BENNETT AND CARNEY

(*Rising and taking a step toward her, together.*) What's the matter?

LUCY

(*Wide-eyed.*) Don't shoot him!

BENNETT

(*Reassuringly.*) Oh! Never mind me, madam. I'm not going to shoot him.

LUCY

(*Still terror-stricken.*) Yes, you are. What have you got that gun for?

BENNETT

(*Smiling.*) I'm going to shoot myself.

LUCY

(*Still excited.*) No, you're not.

BENNETT

Certainly I am.

LUCY

Shoot yourself! (*Calming a little.*) What's the matter? Are you broke?

BENNETT

No.

LUCY

You've got enough cash, and you're going to shoot yourself! (*Turning to CARNEY.*) He's not going to shoot himself, is he?

CARNEY

That is what he says, but I have been trying to prevent him.

(*To BENNETT.*) You must be crazy.

BENNETT

(*Smiling.*) I may have a good reason.

LUCY

Are the police after you? I had a cousin once, he killed himself because they were going to arrest him.

BENNETT

No. You could not understand my reasons, anyhow—so please leave us alone.

LUCY

I think he must have been crazy. He would probably have been sent up for a long time, maybe for life. But I say, all the better. There's no more worry, you don't have to be wondering every day how you're going to feed the kids and pay the rent and keep respectable yourself.

BENNETT

How interesting!

CARNEY

I have just been trying to convince this deluded man of something similar. While there is life and love, there is hope. (*Turning to BENNETT.*) There



are other things to make one wish for life besides faith. There is love. . . .

Yes, haven't you got any consideration for your people? Is there nobody depending on you? Haven't you got a girl who'll care when you're gone?

BENNETT

(*A little impatient.*) No.

CARNEY

Have you no experience of love?

BENNETT

(*Warming up to his theme, speaking bitterly; as he speaks, he drops the gun from forgetful fingers.*) Yes, I've tried love. It did me well for quite a time. I was happy then. There was a woman with big grey eyes who sometimes petted me and sometimes came to me to be petted. It appealed to my vanity. Then she began to take too much interest in me. I tired. There were other women. I've loved them madly, one after the other. Then they began to love me—and it ended. I know it always will end. What is the use in trying again what I know will finish unpleasantly? The zest is only in the chase, and unfortunately I know it. There must be a color of eternity in happiness, or else it is an unsatisfying tone.

LUCY

Well, why don't you get busy and do something? I never saw anybody who had some work to do who spent his time thinking up foolish dope like that—not love, nor suicides, either. You've got too many ideas and not enough to do.

CARNEY

(*With some emotion.*) I am sorry for you, my boy. But love is not all there is in life. Our friend has told us a great truth. Achievement, that is joy. To do something, make something, find something after a search, that is the real beauty of life.

BENNETT

And after you've done it, or found it, or made it, start right in again trying

to do or make or find something else, and so on, until you die.

LUCY

Well, we folks are never going to get anything better, anyway, so we might just as well. Besides, we've got to keep fed. (*As she says this, she becomes more and more serious, as though she had started a strange train of thoughts in her mind.*)

CARNEY

Work is what keeps me happy. I have a book in my little room, on which I am working. I have worked on it for years. It is my child, my joy. Making it grow and perfecting it gives me the keenest delight. It keeps me poor following my ambition to finish it, but, young man, it is worth it, it is worth it. You see, I am, in my way, a philosopher.

BENNETT

(*Scornfully.*) Yes, you are right. You are a philosopher. The difference between a philosopher and a thinker is that one deals in illusions, the other in facts. The philosopher finds a belief and calls it truth, while the thinker finds the truth and makes it his belief.

(*A very gradual increase of red light above indicates the approach of dawn.*)

LUCY

(*Abstractedly.*) I never had time to think up ideas like that. I'm too busy earning three squares a day for me and the kids.

CARNEY

(*To BENNETT.*) But achievement, my friend, achievement!

BENNETT

(*In a tone which implies he is condescending to convince this man of his errors of thought.*) Yes, achievement; creation. Why, the creator is the most unhappy man of all. I sometimes wonder why God does not get out of patience and end himself, too.

CARNEY

(*Sententiously.*) The creator is omniscient.



BENNETT

Yes, the creator knows everything. He knows how his greatest work is done. He is the slave of reality. He never can have any illusions. He is intimate with every detail of his work, he knows each one of its slightest imperfections. What enchants his admirers evokes in him nothing but criticism. They do not know its faults, they were not there at its birth. The most accomplished musician can never enjoy the piece he plays, because he knows how it should be played. The painter of greatest skill sees the flaws in his canvas. To be an ignorant admirer, that is bliss. To be admired is to despise.

LUCY

Well, you seem to get a lot of fun out of telling your strange ideas. What'll you do when you're dead and haven't got any ideas?

CARNEY

Yes, even in cynicism there is an unholy joy.

BENNETT

(*Bitterly.*) A cynic is a sentimentalist with a sense of humor. He gives up all else for his humor, and if it is not sufficient to buoy him up always, he is the most pitiful of mortals. Cynicism also is discovery, and discovery is next to creation. And if you tell me of destruction I'll tell you it also is akin to creation. Destruction exhilarates, but after it comes remorse, because the result of destruction is not beautiful. (*With enthusiasm.*) No, self-destruction is the only perfect form of creation, because after it there can be no regrets, for there is nothing.

LUCY

(*Who has listened to this speech with close attention.*) If you mean being dead, maybe so. I guess there can't be much grief among the dead.

CARNEY

But man's soul lives and suffers.

BENNETT

(*As LUCY listens intently, trying to understand.*) That soul stuff is all vanity. It is a manifestation of the instinct of self-preservation. The only difference between a man and an animal is man's power of imagination. You can trace every point of man's superiority to the fact that he can grasp the abstract.

LUCY

You mean that a horse sees only what is, while a man can see what ain't!

CARNEY

Stop this irreverence. There is eternity for remorse.

BENNETT

(*Leaning forward, pointing a slender finger at CARNEY, transfixing him with his gaze, LUCY following attentively his words.*) There is no eternity. I have never found any evidence of it. I have found much evidence against it.

CARNEY

What evidence?

BENNETT

I fail to see what purpose God would have, for instance, in giving you eternity in which to live your puny, petty life, in the bosom of reality and bound to discover it some day. I can't find anything in me that is worth either the gift or the curse. If I could believe it, I would be happy. It is the most beautiful of fallacies. (*He drops his finger, convinced he has won his point.*) I would be happy until I died, and as there is no after life, I would never find out my mistake.

LUCY

You've got the right idea, Mr. . . . ?

BENNETT

Bennett.

LUCY

You've got the right idea, Mr. Bennett. (*To CARNEY.*) I never figured it out like Mr. Bennett has, but I never



believed there was anything in this after death stuff. Life is too tough for anybody to want it to last forever.

CARNEY

(*Still gravely.*) In the after life, we shall be perfected.

BENNETT

(*Surprised that CARNEY is trying to convince him still.*) Perfected? There is no perfection. No one is perfect. How can you or I become perfect? The only perfect thing is the grave, because when one is in it, one cannot see its faults.

(*Slowly increasing amber light indicates that dawn is very near.*)

LUCY

(*To herself.*) And you can't see nothing nor think nothing nor know nothing. No more work every day all day, no more scrambling for money, no more nothing. Gee!

CARNEY

(*Catching at a last argument.*) You love beauty. The world is full of beauty, if only you will look for it. The flowers, the trees, human kindness, children, music—all that is beautiful. Live for beauty, my friend, don't die for it.

BENNETT

(*LUCY, who has paid little attention to CARNEY, looks intently at BENNETT as he speaks, her brows knitted, trying to get each word.*) No. In death I'll find the greatest beauty. I will take to my bosom eternal unreality. I never will be able to know the tragic truth, because I will shut it out with all the world's temporary beauty in oblivion.

LUCY

(*Still to herself, receiving no attention from the two arguing men.*) Beauty! I'll say so. Nothing more to worry about, nothing more to fight for, nothing more to be afraid of. That would be happiness. And I never knew it! I'd never need to work, and I'd never need to eat, and there wouldn't

be any pain or worry, it wouldn't matter when we were broke. . . .

BENNETT

(*With enthusiasm.*) Yes, the grave is perfect beauty, with none of the world's backyards, none of its hates and petty jealousies and mean little fights and treachery, none of its dirt and its remorse, its aimless ambitions and ephemeral pleasures . . .

(*LUCY stoops swiftly, picks up the revolver from BENNETT's feet, places it to her head.*)

BENNETT

What are you doing? (*With a swift movement he catches her arm, pulls her wrist down. He struggles with her a moment, catches the gun and wrenches it from her hand and throws it on the ground again, on the other side of CARNEY, who has stood surprised into inactivity during the brief struggle.*) What do you mean? Are you crazy? Get away! (*He turns to CARNEY, resuming his speech, while LUCY stands by, arms down, with the face of a spanked child.*) Free from the horror of people, away from everything, with no imperfections to madden you . . . that is happiness . . .

CARNEY

(*Wearied of argument.*) Your philosophy is full of imperfections.

BENNETT

(*Eagerly.*) Of course it is. Yet it is the most unassailable of philosophies, because its premise is that everything is full of imperfections. Now we agree.

CARNEY

(*Disgusted.*) Agree? We do not. What is more, young man, your philosophy is not only imperfect, it is utterly false.

BENNETT

(*A happy light in his eyes, smiling.*) I know it is. That is the beauty of it. Don't you see . . . (*As he is speaking, CARNEY rises, stoops, picks up the revolver. An increase of light shows dawn has come.*)



CARNEY

You're crazy. I have no more time to waste with you. Here. It is dawn. Go ahead. Kill yourself. (*He thrusts the revolver into BENNETT'S hands, turns, picks up his sack and starts towards the hole in the fence through which he came.*)

BENNETT

(*Paying no attention to the revolver, which falls from his hands as he rises and follows CARNEY, his hand outstretched argumentatively.*) Wait, wait! I'll show you the beauty of my philosophy if it takes me . . . Wait!

(*CARNEY has disappeared through the fence. BENNETT follows, still arguing.*)

LUCY

(*Recovering from the motionless astonishment of the events since she picked up the revolver.*) Well, can you beat that? (*Suddenly realizing she has lost much time, and will be late for work, sighs and turns toward the back of the yard. Her eyes catch the glint of the revolver. She stoops and picks it up.*) I might be able to sell that. (*She sighs.*) Oh, hell! (*She starts toward the back of the yard as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS



## Touring Hell

By Helen Drake

SHE was flabby-necked, wide bosomed, lank-limbed—  
Very, very homely.

He was tall and blond and olive-skinned and carefully groomed—  
Very, very handsome.

He was to meet her at four.

He was five minutes late.

During those five minutes she toured Hell.



EVEN more absurd than the notion that because a man comes home with a blonde hair on his shoulder he has been engaged in amour, is the notion that because a man does not come home with a blonde hair on his shoulder he has not been engaged in amour.



THE trouble with women is that every successive romance leaves them more romantic.



# Her Boss

*By Willa Sibert Cather*

PAUL WANNING opened the front door of his house in Orange, closed it softly behind him, and stood looking about the hall as he drew off his gloves.

Nothing was changed there since last night, and yet he stood gazing about him with an interest which a long-married man does not often feel in his own reception hall. The rugs, the two pillars, the Spanish tapestry chairs, were all the same. The Venus di Medici stood on her column as usual and there, at the end of the hall (opposite the front door), was the full-length portrait of Mrs. Wanning, maturely blooming forth in an evening gown, signed with the name of a French painter who seemed purposely to have made his signature indistinct. Though the signature was largely what one paid for, one couldn't ask him to do it over.

In the dining room the colored man was moving about the table set for dinner, under the electric cluster. The candles had not yet been lighted. Wanning watched him with a homesick feeling in his heart. They had had Sam a long while, twelve years, now. His warm hall, the lighted dining-room, the drawing room where only the flicker of the wood fire played upon the shining surfaces of many objects—they seemed to Wanning like a haven of refuge. It had never occurred to him that his house was too full of things. He often said, and he believed, that the women of his household had "perfect taste." He had paid for these objects, sometimes with difficulty, but always with pride. He carried a heavy life-insurance and permitted himself to spend most of the income from a good law

practise. He wished, during his lifetime, to enjoy the benefits of his wife's discriminating extravagance.

Yesterday Wanning's doctor had sent him to a specialist. Today the specialist, after various laboratory tests, had told him most disconcerting things about the state of very necessary, but hitherto wholly uninteresting, organs of his body.

The information pointed to something incredible; insinuated that his residence in this house was only temporary; that he, whose time was so full, might have to leave not only his house and his office and his club, but a world with which he was extremely well satisfied—the only world he knew anything about.

Wanning unbuttoned his overcoat, but did not take it off. He stood folding his muffler slowly and carefully. What he did not understand was, how he could go while other people stayed. Sam would be moving about the table like this, Mrs. Wanning and her daughters would be dressing upstairs, when he would not be coming home to dinner any more; when he would not, indeed, be dining anywhere.

Sam, coming to turn on the parlor lights, saw Wanning and stepped behind him to take his coat.

"Good evening, Mr. Wanning, sah, excuse me. You entahed so quietly, sah, I didn't heah you."

The master of the house slipped out of his coat and went languidly upstairs.

He tapped at the door of his wife's room, which stood ajar.

"Come in, Paul," she called from her dressing table.



She was seated, in a violet dressing gown, giving the last touches to her coiffure, both arms lifted. They were firm and white, like her neck and shoulders. She was a handsome woman of fifty-five,—still a woman, not an old person, Wanning told himself, as he kissed her cheek. She was heavy in figure, to be sure, but she had kept, on the whole, presentable outlines. Her complexion was good, and she wore less false hair than either of her daughters.

Wanning himself was five years older, but his sandy hair did not show the gray in it, and since his mustache had begun to grow white he kept it clipped so short that it was unobtrusive. His fresh skin made him look younger than he was. Not long ago he had overheard the stenographers in his law office discussing the ages of their employers. They had put him down at fifty, agreeing that his two partners must be considerably older than he—which was not the case. Wanning had an especially kindly feeling for the little new girl, a copyist, who had exclaimed that "Mr. Wanning couldn't be fifty; he seemed so boyish!"

Wanning lingered behind his wife, looking at her in the mirror.

"Well, did you tell the girls, Julia?" he asked, trying to speak casually.

Mrs. Wanning looked up and met his eyes in the glass. "The girls?"

She noticed a strange expression come over his face.

"About your health, you mean? Yes, dear, but I tried not to alarm them. They feel dreadfully. I'm going to have a talk with Dr. Seares myself. These specialists are all alarmists, and I've often heard of his frightening people."

She rose and took her husband's arm, drawing him toward the fireplace.

"You are not going to let this upset you, Paul? If you take care of yourself, everything will come out all right. You have always been so strong. One has only to look at you."

"Did you," Wanning asked, "say anything to Harold?"

"Yes, of course. I saw him in town today, and he agrees with me that Seares draws the worst conclusions possible. He says even the young men are always being told the most terrifying things. Usually they laugh at the doctors and do as they please. You certainly don't look like a sick man, and you don't feel like one, do you?"

She patted his shoulder, smiled at him encouragingly, and rang for the maid to come and hook her dress.

When the maid appeared at the door, Wanning went out through the bathroom to his own sleeping chamber. He was too much dispirited to put on a dinner coat, though such remissness was always noticed. He sat down and waited for the sound of the gong, leaving his door open, on the chance that perhaps one of his daughters would come in.

When Wanning went down to dinner he found his wife already at her chair, and the table laid for four.

"Harold," she explained, "is not coming home. He has to attend a first night in town."

A moment later their two daughters entered, obviously "dressed." They both wore earrings and masses of hair. The daughters' names were Roma and Florence,—Roma, Firenze, one of the young men who came to the house often, but not often enough, had called them. Tonight they were going to a rehearsal of "The Dances of the Nations,"—a benefit performance in which Miss Roma was to lead the Spanish dances, her sister the Grecian.

The elder daughter had often been told that her name suited her admirably. She looked, indeed, as we are apt to think the unrestrained beauties of later Rome must have looked,—but as their portrait busts emphatically declare they did not. Her head was massive, her lips full and crimson, her eyes large and heavy-lidded, her forehead low. At costume balls and in living pictures she was always Semiramis, or Poppea, or Theodora. Barbaric accessories brought out something cruel and even rather brutal in her handsome



face. The men who were attracted to her were somehow afraid of her.

Florence was slender, with a long, graceful neck, a restless head, and a flexible mouth — discontent lurked about the corners of it. Her shoulders were pretty, but her neck and arms were too thin. Roma was always struggling to keep within a certain weight—her chin and upper arms grew persistently more solid—and Florence was always striving to attain a certain weight. Wanning used sometimes to wonder why these disconcerting fluctuations could not go the other way; why Roma could not melt away as easily as did her sister, who had to be sent to Palm Beach to save the precious pounds.

"I don't see why you ever put Rickie Allen in charge of the English country dances," Florence said to her sister, as they sat down. "He knows the figures, of course, but he has no real style."

Roma looked annoyed. Rickie Allen was one of the men who came to the house almost often enough.

"He is absolutely to be depended upon, that's why," she said firmly.

"I think he is just right for it, Florence," put in Mrs. Wanning. "It's remarkable he should feel that he can give up the time; such a busy man. He must be very much interested in the movement."

Florence's lip curled drolly under her soup spoon. She shot an amused glance at her mother's dignity.

"Nothing doing," her keen eyes seemed to say.

Though Florence was nearly thirty and her sister a little beyond, there was, seriously, nothing doing. With so many charms and so much preparation, they never, as Florence vulgarly said, quite pulled it off. They had been rushed, time and again, and Mrs. Wanning had repeatedly steeled herself to bear the blow. But the young men went to follow a career in Mexico or the Philippines, or moved to Yonkers, and escaped without a mortal wound.

Roma turned graciously to her father.

"I met Mr. Lane at the Holland House today, where I was lunching with the Burtons, father. He asked about you, and when I told him you were not so well as usual, he said he would call you up. He wants to tell you about some doctor he discovered in Iowa, who cures everything with massage and hot water. It sounds freakish, but Mr. Lane is a very clever man, isn't he?"

"Very," assented Wanning.

"I should think he must be!" sighed Mrs. Wanning. "How in the world did he make all that money, Paul? He didn't seem especially promising years ago, when we used to see so much of them."

"Corporation business. He's attorney for the P. L. and G.," murmured her husband.

"What a pile he must have!" Florence watched the old negro's slow movements with restless eyes. "Here is Jenny, a Contessa, with a glorious palace in Genoa that her father must have bought her. Surely Aldrini had nothing. Have you seen the baby count's pictures, Roma? They're very cunning. I should think you'd go to Genoa and visit Jenny."

"We must arrange that, Roma. It's such an opportunity." Though Mrs. Wanning addressed her daughter, she looked at her husband. "You would get on so well among their friends. When Count Aldrini was here you spoke Italian much better than poor Jenny. I remember when we entertained him, he could scarcely say anything to her at all."

Florence tried to call up an answering flicker of amusement upon her sister's calm, well-bred face. She thought her mother was rather outdoing herself tonight,—since Aldrini had at least managed to say the one important thing to Jenny, somehow, somewhere. Jenny Lane had been Roma's friend and schoolmate, and the Count was an ephemeral hope in Orange. Mrs. Wanning was one of the first matrons to declare that she had no prejudices against foreigners, and at the dinners



that were given for the Count, Roma was always put next him to act as interpreter.

Roma again turned to her father.

"If I were you, dear, I would let Mr. Lane tell me about his doctor. New discoveries are often made by queer people."

Roma's voice was low and sympathetic; she never lost her dignity.

Florence asked if she might have her coffee in her room, while she dashed off a note, and she ran upstairs humming "Bright Lights" and wondering how she was going to stand her family until the summer scattering. Why could Roma never throw off her elegant reserve and call things by their names? She sometimes thought she might like her sister, if she would only come out in the open and howl about her disappointments.

Roma, drinking her coffee deliberately, asked her father if they might have the car early, as they wanted to pick up Mr. Allen and Mr. Rydberg on their way to rehearsal.

Wanning said certainly. Heaven knew he was not stingy about his car, though he could never quite forget that in his day it was the young men who used to call for the girls when they went to rehearsals.

"You are going with us, Mother?" Roma asked as they rose.

"I think so, dear. Your father will want to go to bed early, and I shall sleep better if I go out. I am going to town tomorrow to pour tea for Harold. We must get him some new silver, Paul. I am quite ashamed of his spoons."

Harold, the only son, was a playwright—as yet "unproduced"—and he had a studio in Washington Square.

A half-hour later, Wanning was alone in his library. He would not permit himself to feel aggrieved. What was more commendable than a mother's interest in her children's pleasures? Moreover, it was his wife's way of following things up, of never letting the grass grow under her feet, that had helped to push him along in the world.

She was more ambitious than he,—that had been good for him. He was naturally indolent, and Julia's childlike desire to possess material objects, to buy what other people were buying, had been the spur that made him go after business. It had, moreover, made his house the attractive place he believed it to be.

"Suppose," his wife sometimes said to him when the bills came in from Céleste or Mme. Blanche, "suppose you had homely daughters; how would you like that?"

He wouldn't have liked it. When he went anywhere with his three ladies, Wanning always felt very well done by. He had no complaint to make about them, or about anything. That was why it seemed so unreasonable—He felt along his back incredulously with his hand. Harold, of course, was a trial; but among all his business friends, he knew scarcely one who had a promising boy.

The house was so still that Wanning could hear a faint, metallic tinkle from the butler's pantry. Old Sam was washing up the silver, which he put away himself every night.

Wanning rose and walked aimlessly down the hall and out through the dining-room.

"Any Apollinaris on ice, Sam? I'm not feeling very well tonight."

The old colored man dried his hands. "Yessah, Mistah Wanning. Have a little rye with it, sah?"

"No, thank you, Sam. That's one of the things I can't do any more. I've been to see a big doctor in the city, and he tells me there's something seriously wrong with me. My kidneys have sort of gone back on me."

It was a satisfaction to Wanning to name the organ that had betrayed him, while all the rest of him was so sound.

Sam was immediately interested. He shook his grizzled head and looked full of wisdom.

"Don't seem like a gen'leman of such a temperate life ought to have anything wrong thar, sah."

"No, it doesn't, does it?"



Wanning leaned against the china closet and talked to Sam for nearly half an hour. The specialist who condemned him hadn't seemed half so much interested. There was not a detail about the examination and the laboratory tests in which Sam did not show the deepest concern. He kept asking Wanning if he could remember "straining himself" when he was a young man.

"I've knowed a strain like that to sleep in a man for yeahs and yeahs, and then come back on him, 'deed I have," he said, mysteriously. "An' again, it might be you got a floatin' kidney, sah. Aftah dey once teah loose, dey sometimes don't make no trouble for quite a while."

When Wanning went to his room he did not go to bed. He sat up until he heard the voices of his wife and daughters in the hall below. His own bed somehow frightened him. In all the years he had lived in this house he had never before looked about his room, at that bed, with the thought that he might one day be trapped there, and might not get out again. He had been ill, of course, but his room had seemed a particularly pleasant place for a sick man; sunlight, flowers,—agreeable, well-dressed women coming in and out.

Now there was something sinister about the bed itself, about its position, and its relation to the rest of the furniture.

## II

THE next morning, on his way downtown, Wanning got off the subway train at Astor Place and walked over to Washington Square. He climbed three flights of stairs and knocked at his son's studio. Harold, dressed, with his stick and gloves in his hand, opened the door. He was just going over to the Brevoort for breakfast. He greeted his father with the cordial familiarity practised by all the "boys" of his set, clapped him on the shoulder and said in his light, tonsillitis voice:

"Come in, Governor, how delightful! I haven't had a call from you in a long time."

He threw his hat and gloves on the writing table. He was a perfect gentleman, even with his father.

Florence said the matter with Harold was that he had heard people say he looked like Byron, and stood for it.

What Harold would stand for in such matters was, indeed, the best definition of him. When he read his play "The Street Walker" in drawing rooms and one lady told him it had the poetic symbolism of Tchekhov, and another said that it suggested the biting realism of Brieux, he never, in his most secret thoughts, questioned the acumen of either lady. Harold's speech, even if you heard it in the next room and could not see him, told you that he had no sense of the absurd,—a throaty staccato, with never a downward inflection, trustfully striving to please.

"Just going out?" his father asked. "I won't keep you. Your mother told you I had a discouraging session with Seares?"

"So awfully sorry you've had this bother, Governor; just as sorry as I can be. No question about it's coming out all right, but it's a downright nuisance, your having to diet and that sort of thing. And I suppose you ought to follow directions, just to make us all feel comfortable, oughtn't you?" Harold spoke with fluent sympathy.

Wanning sat down on the arm of a chair and shook his head. "Yes, they do recommend a diet, but they don't promise much from it."

Harold laughed precipitately. "Delicious! All doctors are, aren't they? So profound and oracular! The medicine-man; it's quite the same idea, you see; with tom-toms."

Wanning knew that Harold meant something subtle,—one of the subtleties which he said were only spoiled by being explained—so he came bluntly to one of the issues he had in mind.

"I would like to see you settled before I quit the harness, Harold."

Harold was absolutely tolerant.



He took out his cigarette case and refurbished it with his handkerchief.

"I perfectly understand your point of view, dear Governor, but perhaps you don't altogether get mine. Isn't it so? I am settled. What you mean by being settled, would unsettle me, completely. I'm cut out for just such an existence as this; to live four floors up in an attic, get my own breakfast, and have a charwoman to do for me. I should be awfully bored with an establishment. I'm quite content with a little diggings like this."

Wanning's eyes fell. Somebody had to pay the rent of even such modest quarters as contented Harold, but to say so would be rude, and Harold himself was never rude. Wanning did not, this morning, feel equal to hearing a statement of his son's uncommercial ideals.

"I know," he said hastily. "But now we're up against hard facts, my boy. I did not want to alarm your mother, but I've had a time limit put on me, and it's not a very long one."

Harold threw away the cigarette he had just lighted in a burst of indignation.

"That's the sort of thing I consider criminal, Father, absolutely criminal! What doctor has a right to suggest such a thing? Seares himself may be knocked out tomorrow. What have laboratory tests got to do with a man's will to live? The force of that depends upon his entire personality, not on any organ or pair of organs."

Harold thrust his hands in his pockets and walked up and down, very much stirred. "Really, I have a very poor opinion of scientists. They ought to be made serve an apprenticeship in art, to get some conception of the power of human motives. Such brutality!"

Harold's plays dealt with the grimmest and most depressing matters, but he himself was always agreeable, and he insisted upon high cheerfulness as the correct tone of human intercourse.

Wanning rose and turned to go. There was, in Harold, simply no real-

ity, to which one could break through. The young man took up his hat and gloves.

"Must you go? Let me step along with you to the sub. The walk will do me good."

Harold talked agreeably all the way to Astor Place. His father heard little of what he said, but he rather liked his company and his wish to be pleasant.

Wanning went to his club for luncheon, meaning to spend the afternoon with some of his friends who had retired from business and who read the papers there in the empty hours between two and seven. He got no satisfaction, however. When he tried to tell these men of his present predicament, they began to describe ills of their own in which he could not feel interested. Each one of them had a treacherous organ of which he spoke with animation, almost with pride, as if it were a crafty business competitor whom he was constantly outwitting. Each had a doctor, too, for whom he was ardently soliciting business. They wanted either to telephone their doctor and make an appointment for Wanning, or to take him then and there to the consulting room. When he did not accept these invitations, they lost interest in him and remembered engagements. He called a taxi and returned to the offices of McQuiston, Wade, and Wanning.

Settled at his desk, Wanning decided that he would not go home to dinner, but would stay at the office and dictate a long letter to an old college friend who lived in Wyoming. He could tell Douglas Brown things that he had not succeeded in getting to any one else. Brown, out in the Wind River mountains, couldn't defend himself, couldn't slap Wanning on the back and tell him to gather up the sunbeams.

He called up his house in Orange to say that he would not be home until late. Roma answered the telephone. He spoke mournfully, but she was not disturbed by it.

"Very well, Father. Don't get too



tired," she said in her well modulated voice.

When Wanning was ready to dictate his letter, he looked out from his private office into the reception room and saw that his stenographer in her hat and gloves, and furs of the newest cut, was just leaving.

"Goodnight, Mr. Wanning," she said, drawing down her dotted veil.

Had there been important business letters to be got off on the night mail, he would have felt that he could detain her, but not for anything personal. Miss Doane was an expert legal stenographer, and she knew her value. The slightest delay in dispatching office business annoyed her. Letters that were not signed until the next morning awoke her deepest contempt. She was scrupulous in professional etiquette, and Wanning felt that their relations, though pleasant, were scarcely cordial.

As Miss Doane's trim figure disappeared through the outer door, little Annie Wooley, the copyist, came in from the stenographers' room. Her hat was pinned over one ear, and she was scrambling into her coat as she came, holding her gloves in her teeth and her battered handbag in the fist that was already through a sleeve.

"Annie, I wanted to dictate a letter. You were just leaving, weren't you?"

"Oh, I don't mind!" she answered cheerfully, and pulling off her old coat, threw it on a chair. "I'll get my book."

She followed him into his room and sat down by a table,—though she wrote with her book on her knee.

Wanning had several times kept her after office hours to take his private letters for him, and she had always been good-natured about it. On each occasion, when he gave her a dollar to get her dinner, she protested, laughing, and saying that she could never eat so much as that.

She seemed a happy sort of little creature, didn't pout when she was scolded, and giggled about her own mistakes in spelling. She was plump and undersized, always dodging under the elbows of taller people and clattering

about on high heels, much run over. She had bright black eyes and fuzzy black hair in which, despite Miss Doane's reprimands, she often stuck her pencil. She was the girl who couldn't believe that Wanning was fifty, and he had liked her ever since he overheard that conversation.

Tilting back his chair—he never assumed this position when he dictated to Miss Doane—Wanning began: "To Mr. D. E. Brown, South Forks, Wyoming."

He shaded his eyes with his hand and talked off a long letter to this man who would be sorry that his mortal frame was breaking up. He recalled to him certain fine months they had spent together on the Wind River when they were young men, and said he sometimes wished that like D. E. Brown, he had claimed his freedom in a big country where the wheels did not grind a man as hard as they did in New York. He had spent all these years hustling about and getting ready to live the way he wanted to live, and now he had a puncture the doctors couldn't mend. What was the use of it?

Wanning's thoughts were fixed on the trout streams and the great silver-firs in the canyons of the Wind River Mountains, when he was disturbed by a soft, repeated sniffing. He looked out between his fingers. Little Annie, carried away by his eloquence, was fairly panting to make dots and dashes fast enough, and she was sopping her eyes with an unrepresentable, end-of-the-day handkerchief.

Wanning rambled on in his dictation. Why was she crying? What did it matter to her? He was a man who said good-morning to her, who sometimes took an hour of the precious few she had left at the end of the day and then complained about her bad spelling. When the letter was finished, he handed her a new two dollar bill.

"I haven't got any change tonight; and anyhow, I'd like you to eat a whole lot. I'm on a diet, and I want to see everybody else eat."

Annie tucked her notebook under



her arm and stood looking at the bill which she had not taken up from the table.

"I don't like to be paid for taking letters to your friends, Mr. Wanning," she said impulsively. "I can run personal letters off between times. It ain't as if I needed the money," she added carelessly.

"Get along with you! Anybody who is eighteen years old and has a sweet tooth needs money, all they can get."

Annie giggled and darted out with the bill in her hand.

Wanning strolled aimlessly after her into the reception room.

"Let me have that letter before lunch tomorrow, please, and be sure that nobody sees it." He stopped and frowned. "I don't look very sick, do I?"

"I should say you don't!" Annie got her coat on after considerable tugging. "Why don't you call in a specialist? My mother called a specialist for my father before he died."

"Oh, is your father dead?"

"I should say he is! He was a painter by trade, and he fell off a seventy-foot stack into the East River. Mother couldn't get anything out of the company, because he wasn't buckled. He lingered for four months, so I know all about taking care of sick people. I was attending business college then, and sick as he was, he used to give me dictation for practise. He made us all go into professions; the girls, too. He didn't like us to just run."

Wanning would have liked to keep Annie and hear more about her family, but it was nearly seven o'clock, and he knew he ought, in mercy, to let her go. She was the only person to whom he had talked about his illness who had been frank and honest with him, who had looked at him with eyes that concealed nothing. When he broke the news of his condition to his partners that morning, they shut him off as if he were uttering indecent ravings. All day they had met him with a hurried, abstracted manner. McQuiston and Wade went out to lunch together, and he knew what they were thinking, per-

haps talking, about. Wanning had brought into the firm valuable business, but he was less enterprising than either of his partners.

### III

IN the early summer Wanning's family scattered. Roma swallowed her pride and sailed for Genoa to visit the Contessa Jenny. Harold went to Cornish to be in an artistic atmosphere. Mrs. Wanning and Florence took a cottage at York Harbor where Wanning was supposed to join them whenever he could get away from town. He did not often get away. He felt most at ease among his accustomed surroundings. He kept his car in the city and went back and forth from his office to the club where he was living. Old Sam, his butler, came in from Orange every night to put his clothes in order and make him comfortable.

Wanning began to feel that he would not tire of his office in a hundred years. Although he did very little work, it was pleasant to go down town every morning when the streets were crowded, the sky clear, and the sunshine bright. From the windows of his private office he could see the harbor and watch the ocean liners come down the North River and go out to sea.

While he read his mail, he often looked out and wondered why he had been so long indifferent to that extraordinary scene of human activity and hopefulness. How had a short-lived race of beings the energy and courage valiantly to begin enterprises which they could follow for only a few years; to throw up towers and build sea-monsters and found great businesses, when the frailest of the materials with which they worked, the paper upon which they wrote, the ink upon their pens, had more permanence in this world than they? All this material rubbish lasted. The linen clothing and cosmetics of the Egyptians had lasted. It was only the human flame that certainly, certainly went out. Other things had a fighting chance; they might meet



with mishap and be destroyed, they might not. But the human creature who gathered and shaped and hoarded and foolishly loved these things, he had no chance—absolutely none. Wanning's cane, his hat, his top-coat, might go from beggar to beggar and knock about in this world for another fifty years or so; but not he.

In the late afternoon he never hurried to leave his office now. Wonderful sunsets burned over the North River, wonderful stars trembled up among the towers; more wonderful than anything he could hurry away to. One of his windows looked directly down upon the spire of Old Trinity, with the green churchyard and the pale sycamores far below. Wanning often dropped into the church when he was going out to lunch; not because he was trying to make his peace with Heaven, but because the church was old and restful and familiar, because it and its gravestones had sat in the same place for a long while. He bought flowers from the street boys and kept them on his desk, which his partners thought strange behavior, and which Miss Doane considered a sign that he was failing.

But there were graver things than bouquets for Miss Doane and the senior partner to ponder over.

The senior partner, McQuiston, in spite of his silvery hair and mustache and his important church connections, had rich natural taste for scandal.—After Mr. Wade went away for his vacation, in May, Wanning took Annie Wooley out of the copying room, put her at a desk in his private office, and raised her pay to eighteen dollars a week, explaining to McQuiston that for the summer months he would need a secretary. This explanation satisfied neither McQuiston nor Miss Doane.

Annie was also paid for overtime, and although Wanning attended to very little of the office business now, there was a great deal of overtime. Miss Doane was, of course, 'above' questioning a chit like Annie; but what was he doing with his time and his new secretary, she wanted to know?

If anyone had told her that Wanning was writing a book, she would have said bitterly that it was just like him. In his youth Wanning had hankered for the pen. When he studied law, he had intended to combine that profession with some tempting form of authorship. Had he remained a bachelor, he would have been an unenterprising literary lawyer to the end of his days. It was his wife's restlessness and her practical turn of mind that had made him a money-getter. His illness seemed to bring back to him the illusions with which he left college.

As soon as his family were out of the way and he shut up the Orange house, he began to dictate his autobiography to Annie Wooley. It was not only the story of his life, but an expression of all his theories and opinions, and a commentary on the fifty years of events which he could remember.

Fortunately, he was able to take great interest in this undertaking. He had the happiest convictions about the clear-cut style he was developing and his increasing felicity in phrasing. He meant to publish the work handsomely, at his own expense and under his own name. He rather enjoyed the thought of how greatly disturbed Harold would be. He and Harold differed in their estimates of books. All the solid works which made up Wanning's library, Harold considered beneath contempt. Anybody, he said, could do that sort of thing.

When Wanning could not sleep at night, he turned on the light beside his bed and made notes on the chapter he meant to dictate the next day.

When he returned to the office after lunch, he gave instructions that he was not to be interrupted by telephone calls, and shut himself up with his secretary.

After he had opened all the windows and taken off his coat, he fell to dictating. He found it a delightful occupation, the solace of each day. Often he had sudden fits of tiredness; then he would lie down on the leather sofa and drop asleep, while Annie read "The Leopard's Spots" until he awoke.

Like many another business man



Wanning had relied so long on stenographers that the operation of writing with a pen had become laborious to him. When he undertook it, he wanted to cut everything short. But walking up and down his private office, with the strong afternoon sun pouring in at his windows, a fresh air stirring, all the people and boats moving restlessly down there, he could say things he wanted to say. It was like living his life over again.

He did not miss his wife or his daughters. He had become again the mild, contemplative youth he was in college, before he had a profession and a family to grind for, before the two needs which shape our destiny had made of him pretty much what they make of every man.

At five o'clock Wanning sometimes went out for a cup of tea and took Annie along. He felt dull and discouraged as soon as he was alone. So long as Annie was with him, he could keep a grip on his own thoughts. They talked about what he had just been dictating to her. She found that he liked to be questioned, and she tried to be greatly interested in it all.

After tea, they went back to the office. Occasionally Wanning lost track of time and kept Annie until it grew dark. He knew he had old McQuiston guessing, but he didn't care. One day the senior partner came to him with a reproving air.

"I am afraid Miss Doane is leaving us, Paul. She feels that Miss Woolley's promotion is irregular."

"How is that any business of hers, I'd like to know? She has all my legal work. She is always disagreeable enough about doing anything else."

McQuiston's puffy red face went a shade darker.

"Miss Doane has a certain professional pride; a strong feeling for office organization. She doesn't care to fill an equivocal position. I don't know that I blame her. She feels that there is something not quite regular about the confidence you seem to place in this inexperienced young woman."

Wanning pushed back his chair.

"I don't care a hang about Miss Doane's sense of propriety. I need a stenographer who will carry out my instructions. I've carried out Miss Doane's long enough. I've let that schoolma'am hector me for years. She can go when she pleases."

That night McQuiston wrote to his partner that things were in a bad way, and they would have to keep an eye on Wanning. He had been seen at the theatre with his new stenographer.

That was true. Wanning had several times taken Annie to the Palace on Saturday afternoon. When all his acquaintances were off motoring or playing golf, when the down-town offices and even the streets were deserted, it amused him to watch a foolish show with a delighted, cheerful little person beside him.

Beyond her generosity, Annie had no shining merits of character, but she had the gift of thinking well of everything, and wishing well. When she was there Wanning felt as if there were someone who cared whether this was a good or a bad day with him. Old Sam, too, was like that. While the old black man put him to bed and made him comfortable, Wanning could talk to him as he talked to little Annie. Even if he dwelt upon his illness, in plain terms, in detail, he did not feel as if he were imposing on them.

People like Sam and Annie admitted misfortune,—admitted it almost cheerfully. Annie and her family did not consider illness or any of its hard facts vulgar or indecent. It had its place in their scheme of life, as it had not in that of Wanning's friends.

Annie came out of a typical poor family of New York. Of eight children, only four lived to grow up. In such families the stream of life is broad enough, but runs shallow. In the children, vitality is exhausted early. The roots do not go down into anything very strong. Illness and deaths and funerals, in her own family and in those of her friends, had come at frequent intervals in Annie's life. Since



they had to be, she and her sisters made the best of them. There was something to be got out of funerals, even, if they were managed right. They kept people in touch with old friends who had moved up-town, and revived kindly feelings.

Annie had often given up things she wanted because there was sickness at home, and now she was patient with her boss. What he paid her for overtime work by no means made up to her what she lost.

Annie was not in the least thrifty, nor were any of her sisters. She had to make a living, but she was not interested in getting all she could for her time, or in laying up for the future. Girls like Annie know that the future is a very uncertain thing, and they feel no responsibility about it. The present is what they have—and it is all they have. If Annie missed a chance to go sailing with the plumber's son on Saturday afternoon, why, she missed it. As for the two dollars her boss gave her, she handed them over to her mother. Now that Annie was getting more money, one of her sisters quit a job she didn't like and was staying at home for a rest. That was all promotion meant to Annie.

The first time Annie's boss asked her to work on Saturday afternoon, she could not hide her disappointment. He suggested that they might knock off early and go to a show, or take a run in his car, but she grew tearful and said it would be hard to make her family understand. Wanning thought perhaps he could explain to her mother. He called his motor and took Annie home.

When his car stopped in front of the tenement house on Eighth Avenue, heads came popping out of the windows for six stories up, and all the neighbor women, in dressing sacks and wrappers, gazed down at the machine and at the couple alighting from it. A motor meant a wedding or the hospital.

The plumber's son, Willy Steen, came over from the corner saloon to see what

was going on, and Annie introduced him at the doorstep.

Mrs. Wooley asked Wanning to come into the parlor and invited him to have a chair of ceremony between the folding bed and the piano.

Annie, nervous and tearful, escaped to the dining-room—the cheerful spot where the daughters visited with each other and with their friends. The parlor was a masked sleeping chamber and store room.

The plumber's son sat down on the sofa beside Mrs. Wooley, as if he were accustomed to share in the family councils. Mrs. Wooley waited expectant and kindly. She looked the sensible, hard-working woman that she was, and one could see she hadn't lived all her life on Eighth Avenue without learning a great deal.

Wanning explained to her that he was writing a book which he wanted to finish during the summer months when business was not so heavy. He was ill and could not work regularly. His secretary would have to take his dictation when he felt able to give it; must, in short, be a sort of companion to him. He would like to feel that she could go out in his car with him, or even to the theater, when he felt like it. It might have been better if he had engaged a young man for this work, but since he had begun it with Annie, he would like to keep her if her mother was willing.

Mrs. Wooley watched him with friendly, searching eyes. She glanced at Willy Steen, who, wise in such distinctions, had decided that there was nothing shady about Annie's boss. He nodded his sanction.

"I don't want my girl to conduct herself in any such way as will prejudice her, Mr. Manning," she said thoughtfully. "If you've got daughters, you know how that is. You've been liberal with Annie, and it's a good position for her. It's right she should go to business every day, and I want her to do her work right, but I like to have her home after working hours. I always think a young girl's time is her



own after business hours, and I try not to burden them when they come home. I'm willing she should do your work as suits you, if it's her wish; but I don't like to press her. The good times she misses now, it's not you nor me, sir, that can make them up to her. These young things has their feelings."

"Oh, I don't want to press her, either," Wanning said hastily. "I simply want to know that you understand the situation. I've made her a little present in my will as a recognition that she is doing more for me than she is paid for."

"That's something above me, sir. We'll hope there won't be no question of wills for many years yet," Mrs. Wooley spoke heartily. "I'm glad if my girl can be of any use to you, just so she don't prejudice herself."

The plumber's son rose as if the interview were over.

"It's all right, Mama Wooley, don't you worry," he said.

He picked up his canvas cap and turned to Wanning. "You see, Annie ain't the sort of girl that would want to be spotted circulating around with a monied party her folks didn't know all about. She'd lose friends by it."

After this conversation Annie felt a great deal happier. She was still shy and a trifle awkward with poor Wanning when they were outside the office building, and she missed the old freedom of her Saturday afternoons. But she did the best she could, and Willy Steen tried to make it up to her.

In Annie's absence he often came in of an afternoon to have a cup of tea and a sugar-bun with Mrs. Wooley and the daughter who was "resting." As they sat at the dining-room table, they discussed Annie's employer, his peculiarities, his health, and what he had told Mrs. Wooley about his will.

Mrs. Wooley said she sometimes felt afraid he might disinherit his children, as rich people often did, and make talk; but she hoped for the best. Whatever came to Annie, she prayed it might not be in the form of taxable property.

#### IV

LATE in September Wanning grew suddenly worse. His family hurried home, and he was put to bed in his house in Orange. He kept asking the doctors when he could get back to the office, but he lived only eight days.

The morning after his father's funeral, Harold went to the office to consult Wanning's partners and to read the will. Everything in the will was as it should be. There were no surprises except a codicil in the form of a letter to Mrs. Wanning, dated July 8th, requesting that out of the estate she should pay the sum of one thousand dollars to his stenographer, Annie Wooley, "in recognition of her faithful services."

"I thought Miss Doane was my father's stenographer," Harold exclaimed.

Alec McQuiston looked embarrassed and spoke in a low, guarded tone.

"She was, for years. But this spring,—" he hesitated.

McQuiston loved a scandal. He leaned across his desk toward Harold.

"This spring your father put this little girl, Miss Wooley, a copyist, utterly inexperienced, in Miss Doane's place. Miss Doane was indignant and left us. The change made comment here in the office. It was slightly—No, I will be frank with you, Harold, it was very irregular."

Harold also looked grave. "What could my father have meant by such a request as this to my mother?"

The silver haired senior partner flushed and spoke as if he were trying to break something gently.

"I don't understand it, my boy. But I think, indeed I prefer to think, that your father was not quite himself all this summer. A man like your father does not, in his right senses, find pleasure in the society of an ignorant, common little girl. He does not make a practise of keeping her at the office after hours, often until eight o'clock, or take her to restaurants and to the



theater with him; not, at least, in a slanderous city like New York."

Harold flinched before McQuiston's meaning gaze and turned aside in pained silence. He knew, as a dramatist, that there are dark chapters in all men's lives, and this but too clearly explained why his father had stayed in town all summer instead of joining his family.

McQuiston asked if he should ring for Annie Wooley.

Harold drew himself up. "No. Why should I see her? I prefer not to. But with your permission, Mr. McQuiston, I will take charge of this request to my mother. It could only give her pain, and might awaken doubts in her mind."

"We hardly know," murmured the senior partner, "where an investigation would lead us. Technically, of course, I cannot agree with you. But if, as one of the executors of the will, you wish to assume personal responsibility for this bequest, under the circumstances—irregularities beget irregularities."

"My first duty to my father," said Harold, "is to protect my mother."

That afternoon McQuiston called Annie Wooley into his private office and told her that her services would not be needed any longer, and that in lieu of notice the clerk would give her two weeks' salary.

"Can I call up here for references?" Annie asked.

"Certainly. But you had better ask for me, personally. You must know there has been some criticism of you here in the office, Miss Wooley."

"What about?" Annie asked boldly.

"Well, a young girl like you cannot render so much personal service to her employer as you did to Mr. Wanning without causing unfavorable comment. To be blunt with you, for your own good, my dear young lady, your services to your employer should terminate in the office, and at the close of office hours. Mr. Wanning was a very sick man and his judgment was at fault, but you should have known what a

girl in your station can do and what she cannot do."

The vague discomfort of months flashed up in little Annie. She had no mind to stand by and be lectured without having a word to say for herself.

"Of course he was sick, poor man!" she burst out. "Not as anybody seemed much upset about it. I wouldn't have given up my half-holidays for anybody if they hadn't been sick, no matter what they paid me. There wasn't anything in it for me."

McQuiston raised his hand warningly.

"That will do, young lady. But when you get another place, remember this: it is never your duty to entertain or to provide amusement for your employer."

He gave Annie a look which she did not clearly understand, although she pronounced him a nasty old man as she hustled on her hat and jacket.

When Annie reached home she found Willy Steen sitting with her mother and sister at the dining-room table. This was the first day that Annie had gone to the office since Wanning's death, and her family awaited her return with suspense.

"Hello yourself," Annie called as she came in and threw her handbag into an empty armchair.

"You're off early, Annie," said her mother gravely. "Has the will been read?"

"I guess so. Yes, I know it has. Miss Wilson got it out of the safe for them. The son came in. He's a pill."

"Was nothing said to you, daughter?"

"Yes, a lot. Please give me some tea, mother." Annie felt that her swagger was failing.

"Don't tantalize us, Ann," her sister broke in. "Didn't you get anything?"

"I got the mit, all right. And some back talk from the old man that I'm awful sore about."

Annie dashed away the tears and gulped her tea.

Gradually her mother and Willy drew the story from her. Willy offered



at once to go to the office building and take his stand outside the door and never leave it until he had punched old Mr. McQuiston's face. He rose as if to attend to it at once, but Mrs. Wooley drew him to his chair again and patted his arm.

"It would only start talk and get the girl in trouble, Willy. When it's lawyers, folks in our station is helpless. I certainly believed that man when he sat here; you heard him yourself. Such a gentleman as he looked."

Willy thumped his great fist, still in punching position, down on his knee.

"Never you be fooled again, Mama Wooley. You'll never get anything out of a rich guy that he ain't signed up in the courts for. Rich is tight. There's no exceptions."

Annie shook her head.

"I didn't want anything out of him. He was a nice, kind man, and he had his troubles, I guess. He wasn't tight."

"Still," said Mrs. Wooley sadly, "Mr. Wanning had no call to hold out promises. I hate to be disappointed in a gentleman. You've had confining work for some time, daughter; a rest will do you good."



## The Misty Lake

*By Charles Wharton Stork*

MIRROR-WATER silvery smooth  
Where the clustered lily-pads lie,  
And the slim birch peeps among pines that pierce  
Toward the dead gray void of the sky.

But the mirror dims under lilac mist,  
The tree-fringe blurs behind,  
And the lake is a vague soft nothingness  
Like the blank of a tired mind.



A MAN is always as great a fool as some woman or other has thought it worth while to make him.



A PRETTY stenographer covereth a multitude of misspelled words.



SALARY:—A chorus girl's pin money.





# Enchanters of Men

XI

A Delilah of the Past

By Thornton Hall

I

**A**MONG the women fair and frail who strutted the stage of London in the early years of George IV not one appears more vivid and seductive today than Mistress Gertrude Mahon, who flashes her brilliant way through the *chroniques scandaleuses* of the time.

Though her beautiful body has been dust for more than a century, we can still see her flitting, a dazzling little figure, the cynosure of all eyes, among the gay and fashionable crowds at Ranelagh and Vauxhall; proudly promenading the Mall on the arm of my Lord Cholmondeley; driving through Hyde Park, a miniature queen, with the coquettish flashing of eyes and radiant smiles, and to an accompaniment of sweeping bows and doffed hats; or dancing the minuet with a grace all her own to the witchery of her vis-à-vis, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

The "Bird of Paradise" she was dubbed for the brilliance of her plumage.

"The daintiest little elf that ever masqueraded in woman's guise," she is described, "the incarnation of the joy of life, bubbling with gaiety and mischief, turning all heads by her witcheries, and flitting from conquest to conquest like a butterfly from flower to flower."

"She was," says another chronicler of the time, "the dearest little doll that ever was seen, her waist was not a

span round, her stature four feet one inch, with hair truly Mohammedan, delicately arched eyebrows and soft, pouting, tantalizing lips."

How Mistress Gertrude came into "that galley" was a puzzle to many. She had for father James Tilson, an Irishman of old family; and for mother the widowed Countess of Kerry, daughter of the Earl of Cavan.

She had thus been cradled in high respectability, far removed from the half-world of which she was to be the acknowledged queen. It was doubtless from her father, the gay, devil-may-care Irishman, with his passion for wine and women, that she drew her reckless pursuit of pleasure and conquest; and to her mother that she owed her beauty, her vanity, and love of fine feathers.

Born one April day in 1752, Gertrude spent her early years in the healthy environment of country life in Cheshire, where her father had squandered his small fortune in building a lordly pleasure-house. Here she was ideally happy with her ponies and her dogs. Then came a transition to London; the departure of her father to consular work at Cadiz; his death, which followed a year later; and Gertrude was left to the sole care of her twice-widowed mother, the last woman who should have been entrusted with the training of a young girl of such high spirits and headstrong character.

Indolent and self-indulgent, the Countess was too absorbed in the triv-



ialities that made up her own life to give much thought to her daughter's doings or future.

Surrounded by her birds, whose cages lined the walls of her drawing-room in Wigmore Street, her fluffy lap-dogs lying in their satin-lined baskets at her feet, her ladyship spent her days in fancy-work—in embroidery, the gorgeous trimming of her gowns, the making of many-hued paper flowers for the decoration of her Chinese Temple, and so on; leaving her daughter to follow her own sweet way unchecked, with less care than she devoted to one of her feathered pets.

It was thus inevitable that a girl so romantic and high-spirited should seek her own amusements; and it is not long before we find her embarked on her first love-adventure, which had an unromantic ending. At sixteen, we are told, she completely lost her heart to her young and handsome music-master, Charles Burney; and, as he shewed no sign of reciprocating her affection, she decided to take advantage of leap-year and tell him of her attachment. Ignoring alike maidenly delicacy and the difference in their social positions, she wrote an avowal of her passion on her glove, which she dropped for him to pick up.

When Charles Burney stooped to pick up the tell-tale glove, while the Liliputian beauty glided from the room with a rosy blush and a sidelong glance, he could not have been blamed had he flung himself at her feet and confessed that he reciprocated her passion; for seldom has any man resisted temptation that came to him in so seductive a guise.

Gertrude was now in the first bloom of her loveliness, the very incarnation of youthful grace and daintiness, her tiny figure perfect in its modelling; a dainty little head, crowned with luxuriant hair, black as a raven's wing; a complexion of almost dazzling purity; large, dark-brown eyes which could flash with flame one moment, and the next, melt into an exquisite tenderness; rounded cheeks in which bewitching

dimples played; and the sweetest "rosebud" mouth that was ever made for kisses.

But alas! the music-master's heart was no longer his to give; and when the days passed and he gave no sign of having even seen her message, she was quick to console herself with lovers who were gallant enough to make the overtures themselves. For it was inevitable that a young lady so well-born and so richly-dowered by nature should have no lack of gallants to swell her retinue; and we see her at routs and assemblies surrounded by a crowd of admirers, vieing with each other for the smiles which she so lavishly and indiscriminately scattered.

To her, even thus early, the homage of men was the very breath of life; she gloried in it. She could not have too many slaves to practice her sweet tyrannies on; and she was in the seventh heaven when she was driving them to distraction by her coquetries and caprices.

But to one and all she turned a cold and dainty shoulder, if a smiling face, when they ventured to ask for more than her smiles, until her Prince came at last in the guise of Gilbreath Mahon, an Irishman, to whom, to the surprise and consternation of her friends, she capitulated almost at the first assault.

## II

STRIKINGLY handsome, with a clever and supple tongue, and the strange magnetism which few women can resist, Mahon was a pastmaster in the arts of conquest.

He had, too, accomplishments which appealed strongly to Gertrude's passion for music. He could sing divinely; he could work magic with his violin. That he was a notorious gamester, the boon comrade of duellists and swash-bucklers, a man notorious for questionable living in most of the capitals of Europe, only served in Gertrude's eyes to invest him with the halo of romance, and to feed the infatuation which led to her surrender.



That her mother, the Countess, would be furious at the very suggestion of such a union, that she would sooner see her daughter dead than consent to it, Gertrude knew quite well. But such an obstacle only served to add zest to her determination to be Gilbreath Mahon's wife at any cost.

And thus it was that one October day she slipped stealthily away from her home, leaving behind a note of explanation for her mother, and was soon racing with her gambler lover, swiftly as a chaise and four could carry them, on the road to Dover.

But the runaways were soon to discover that they had underrated her ladyship's sagacity. The moment the Countess found that her bird had flown she rushed to Bow Street, made an application to Sir John Fielding, and, before the chaise had covered many miles, a couple of mounted "runners" were in hot pursuit. Thus it was that, as they alighted at a Dover inn for a meal preparatory to crossing the Channel, a hand was placed on Mahon's shoulder and a gruff voice told him that he must consider himself under arrest.

Here, indeed, was a predicament that might well have daunted any man less bold and resourceful than the Irish gamester. But "Gilly" Mahon was not the man to be so easily trapped and thwarted. He had extricated himself from worse dilemmas before, and his ready wit soon saw a loophole for escape.

Pretending to submit, he begged permission for his companion to retire to her bedroom to rest awhile, while he invited his captors to refresh themselves at his expense, an invitation which they by no means reluctantly accepted.

Under the influence of their prisoner's gay spirits and flow of anecdote the runners' severity and suspicions quickly melted away; and glass followed glass to a crescendo of laughter and merriment until all thought of the runaway lady upstairs had escaped their muddled brains.

Meanwhile, the little strategem which Mahon had hurriedly whispered to his

companion before she vanished to her room had been successfully carried out. Gertrude had made her escape by means of a ladder placed against her window by the obliging host, and was safely aboard a vessel about to sail for France. Here she was joined by her lover as soon as he saw his guests safely "under the table"; and before morning dawned the fugitives had their feet on French soil.

But they were soon to discover that their troubles were by no means ended; for before they had leisurely begun to resume their journey, the detectives, who had quickly recovered their sobriety on learning that their birds had flown and had followed them by the next packet from Dover, appeared on the scene, armed with a warrant signed by the Intendant of Calais; and Gertrude found herself lodged in a convent pending further instructions.

Once more, however, the resourceful Mahon proved himself equal to the emergency. By the advice of a Calais lawyer he sent a petition to the King at Paris; and to his delight was rewarded, within a few days, by an injunction to the authorities to release Miss Tilson without delay, and to pack off the Bow Street runners to England. Thus, after much adventure and tribulation, the fugitives were free to continue their journey, which had its goal at a Flanders altar.

Then followed a few weeks of blissful honeymoon during which Gertrude was ideally happy with her ne'er-dowell husband, until their scanty exchequer was exhausted, and they were obliged to retrace their steps to London, not a little fearful of the reception that awaited them.

Nor were their fears unfounded; for, although Lady Kerry took her prodigal and penitent daughter to her arms with tears of joy and forgiveness, she refused even to see the scapegrace who had had the insolence to masquerade as her son-in-law.

Not only, too, did she refuse point-blank to open her purse for him; she took steps to have Gertrude's small for-



tune securely settled on her, so that her husband could not lay felonious hands on it. And to complete Mahon's discomfiture, all his wife's exalted relatives, from Lord Kerry, her brother, to her uncle, the Earl of Cavan, declined to recognize his existence.

It is thus small wonder that, with an empty purse and a wife to whose family he was a pariah, Mahon should seek consolation among his old friends and haunts, where at least he was assured of a welcome and a means of livelihood; and when the well-gilded daughter of a fellow-gamster cast amorous eyes on him he was by no means loth to tempt fortune with another runaway excursion, leaving his disillusioned and furious wife to console herself as best she could.

When, a few months later, her mother died, bequeathing to her her "affectionate blessing" and her entire estate, Mistress Mahon was at last free to indulge her passion for adventure to the full; and this she lost no time in doing. Now in the full bloom of her loveliness, she could afford to pick and choose among the men who sought her favours; and we soon see her the center of a vortex of gaiety, with the most notorious pleasure-loving women for companions and the most notorious gallants in town for courtiers.

The newspapers now became eloquent on the subject of "the beautiful Mrs. Mahon" and her doings. From this time we find her in the gayest and most vicious coteries of London, fluttering through balls and masquerades, the focus of all eyes, the very soul of gaiety and abandon. Now she is seen at a great ball at the Pantheon, leaning on the arm of that handsome roué, Lord Cholmondeley, the "Athletic Peer,"—"a merry little mask" eclipsing all other women by her beauty and the brilliance of her plumage as the Bird of Paradise eclipses all its more sober-hued rivals.

Now we see her at one of the great Ridottos at the Opera House, her gay feathers discarded, "in a white muslin dress, dealing love and lavender with becoming grace"; and again at Rane-

lagh, wearing "an elegant and simple dress, the modern cestus around her waist, and her hair of the finest jet combed in ringlets, without the least shade of white or red powder."

And always, whenever we catch a glimpse of her, she is the central figure, radiantly lovely, her laugh the most musical, her eyes the brightest, her tiny figure the most exquisite in its grace, a creature of sunshine, full to overflowing with the joy of life.

Among her bosom friends at this time was Henrietta, Countess of Grosvenor, the Duke of Cumberland's "dear little Angel," and also the "dear little Angel" of many another successor to the husband who had discarded her. Only a few weeks earlier she had written to her Royal lover, "How happy will that day be to me that brings you back! I shall be unable to speak for joy. My dearest soul, I send you ten thousand kisses."

Now the "Profligate Countess," as she was not unjustly dubbed, was protesting an equal devotion to the Duke's successor in her affection, Sir Gregory Page Turner, a wealthy baronet whose gold she was squandering with a lavish hand.

And it was through her friend, Lady Grosvenor, that Mistress Mahon was able to catch in her toils the baronet's no less wealthy brother, Captain Turner, of the Guards, who was only too happy to place his money-bags at her disposal.

### III

THUS we now see the Bird of Paradise "well matched and elegantly caged" in a luxurious home in Blenheim Street, with her adoring little Guardsman for squire and slave, squandering his money prodigally to gratify her lightest whim; and with the baronet and the Countess to complete the circle. But the time was not long before the "green-eyed monster" obtruded into the little coterie. The Captain considered that Sir Gregory was too attentive to his lady; the Countess was up in arms in the same



cause; and within a few weeks Londoners were reading to their amusement in the *Morning Post* that "The Bird of Paradise broke through the upper part of her cage two days ago; flew from her military keeper, and perched on the shoulder of Sir John Lade, as he was driving his phaeton and four through Knightsbridge, who carried her home to Park Place. The forsaken Captain is disconsolate."

Once more the inconstant "bird" had flown from her gilded cage, and this time she had "perched on the shoulder" of that notorious sporting Baronet, Sir John Lade, one of the greatest roués in town, though he was still in his 'teens—spendthrift, gamester and swash-buckler, with the habits and tastes of an ostler. There could be no greater contrast than between this titled hooligan and the courtly little Captain whom she had so lightly abandoned; and it was not long before the boy baronet's coarseness and uncouthness had so disgusted her that she was glad to return to her deserted Guardsman, who received her with open arms of welcome.

For eighteen months, we are told, the two lived happily, revelling in all the dissipations of London, and causing Brighton and Margate to open their eyes in amazement at their splendour and extravagance.

As a chronicler of the time says:

"The Bird of Paradise, though no larger than a canary, can swallow gold and silver with the facility of an ostrich."

And it is not surprising that the time came when the Captain's exchequer ran dry.

One January day in 1779 he was arrested for debt and carried off to the King's Bench Prison in St. George's Fields, whither, to the amazement of the world, Gertrude followed him, determined in a spasm of loyalty to share his captivity as she had shared his splendour.

But her impulse proved as transitory as it was generous; and before a week had passed she found the environment of "His Majesty's aviary" so little to

her taste that, with a "peck" of adieu, she flew away, to join the masqueraders at the Opera House and the giddy crowds at Ranelagh and Vauxhall.

Fortunately at this stage the Duke of Queensberry placed his purse at Gertrude's disposal and thus enabled her to resume her plumage and her life of gaiety and adventure. Meanwhile the Captain, through the assistance of friends, was able to gain his freedom, and escaped to the Continent, where he met and married a rich heiress, thus finally closing the door on the siren who had been his undoing.

Now we find Mistress Mahon fully launched on her career as a "freelance" of love, hailed, by virtue of her beauty and her fascinations, Queen of the half-world, and revelling in her queendom.

Once more the newspapers are full of her activities; and among a hundred such notices we read:

"The Bird of Paradise appeared at Vauxhall in glittering plumage, dazzling all eyes by her brilliance and turning all heads by her coquetries and amours."

Now she is at Brighton, "disporting in the waves with the grace of a mermaid and an almost equal tenuity of costume"; and again we see her driving in the Park, a brilliant little figure, her exquisitely flushed face and sparkling eyes crowned by towering plumes, and with a mounted escort of half a dozen gallants.

Still her ambition was not satisfied.

She now yearned for a new queendom, that of the footlights; and in the autumn of 1780 we find her strutting the stage of Covent Garden Theater in "The Spanish Fryar," to a house crowded with the world of rank and fashion. But alas for her ambition! In spite of all her efforts the audience remained cold and unresponsive.

"Her tiny figure and her small voice were lost in the vastness of her surroundings; she lacked personal magnetism, she displayed no genuine inspiration"; and the general verdict was that, however brilliant the Bird of Paradise



might be off the stage, on it she was a failure.

Further appearances in "Know Your Own Mind" and "The Provoked Husband" were not more successful; and Gertrude was obliged to abandon all hope of the new sceptre she coveted.

But if this sovereignty was denied her, she had abundant compensation.

She was now at the zenith of her loveliness, the most beautiful and courted woman in London. Her wardrobes were full of the costliest and most exquisite gowns; and as she made her progress through the London streets in her French yellow coach drawn by four richly caparisoned horses, she was the most envied woman in town. Her extravagance was now fed from the purse of Colonel Boden, the "fattest, best-tempered and most popular man in London"; which purse she drained so effectually that within a few weeks his creditors found him a lodging in Newgate Prison, as successor to Captain Turner.

But the loss of a gallant never disturbed Gertrude's equanimity for a moment. She was so accustomed to it. And there was never any lack of successors to take his place. The adipose Colonel disposed of, her ambition now took its highest flight. She was determined to catch in her toils the greatest man in the land, the Prince of Wales; and to this grateful task she now set herself.

#### IV

CULTIVATING the acquaintance of the Prince's barber, she received from him every morning his programme for the day; and thus, wherever the royal youth was, Mistress Gertrude was there.

If he went to the Opera his eyes fell on her in an opposite box, a dazzling little figure in the most daring of toilettes.

If he drove in the Park, her cabriolet, her radiant smile and flashing eyes were always in evidence.

Such marked and assiduous attention from so beautiful a woman could not

fail to rouse the interest of the boy Prince, who thus early had ever an eye for beauty; and it was not long before she had added to her retinue of gallants the "First Gentleman in Europe," whose visits to Great Portland Street began to provoke amused comments in the newspapers and clubs.

But in spite of all her splendour and triumphs Gertrude's bed of roses was not without its thorns. Her extravagance kept her purse, in spite of its lavish supplies, always at a low ebb; her creditors were often clamorous; and her impecunious husband was making constant demands on her, which prudence compelled her to meet. And it was not until at last he was safely under lock and key, under sentence for felony, that she was able to breathe freely and to start on a Continental jaunt, with a Mr. Calcraft for companion.

But Mistress Mahon had now passed the zenith of her amazing career; and the rest of her life-journey was to be downward.

On her return from the Continent we see her for the first time haunting low resorts, the center of attraction at such places as Feuiliard's dancing-rooms—"a noted Fandango frequented by a crowd of grisettes, mantua-makers, Bow Street runners and Bow Street loungers," her laughter the loudest, her abandon the greatest.

Her bosom friends were now the most notorious ladies of the half-world; her gallants, tavern-loungers and gamesters. The Countess's daughter had sunk to the level of her husband; and, strange to say, seemed quite happy in her new environment.

It was the pathos of this fall from her former estate that inspired the sympathetic lines of a poet of the time:

"M—h—n, sweetest Bird of Paradise!  
Unhappy warbler! to such arts as these  
Must you submit, sadly compelled to  
please.  
Not such the hope your early youth be-  
lieved;  
Not such thy hope, first flattered, then  
deceived——"

For a brief period she emerges from



this under-world to strut the stage in Dublin, where crowded houses flocked to see the "notorious Mistress Mahon," of whose escapades they had heard so much. For a few splendid weeks she was the toast of the town, the High Priestess of Fashion; and she crowned her brief queendom of the Irish capital by casting her spell over Ireland's Attorney-General, Earl of Clare to-be, a man as famous for his gallantries as for his knowledge of the law.

This, however, was the last real flash of the expiring flame.

On her return to London she vanishes largely from view. Her beauty fading, with empty purse and few now to help to fill it, she was obliged to live obscurely, thankful to escape the clutches of her creditors.

Occasionally, it is true, Fortune smiled again on her; and thus we see her reappearing at Bath or at Margate in something of her old-time brilliance and gaiety.

In 1791 we see her living, as companion, with my Lady Douglas, with an

occasional visit to a theater or concert to break the monotony of her life; and a little later she is presiding at a faro-table in a low gaming-house.

Once more we catch a glimpse of her playing Lady Teazle to a crowded house at a Margate theater, and winning the first and also the last of her stage laurels by an impersonation marked by "much charm and vivacity."

This was Mistress Mahon's last curtsy to the world on whose stage she had played so many romantic and brilliant rôles. For the "painted doll in the Temple of Venus," the years that remained were years of poverty and eclipse; and the curtain finally falls on the amazing drama of her life as she is living in the Isle of Man, "under the protection of a Hibernian refugee," her beauty vanished, her conquests and splendours but a memory.

*The twelfth and last article in this series, entitled "An Imperial Madcap," will appear in the next number of the SMART SET.*



## Encounter

*By Babette Deutsch*

THE fury of music died in soft applause;  
Choked aisles were darkened by the crowd  
That closed, and broke. And in an instant pause  
Your face flashed pale, where one obscurely bowed.

The level light lay like a saffron stain  
Upon the pavement. But the drowsy air  
Was heavy with summer's sweet as though with pain.  
I did not look to know that you were there.

There was a chatter of farewells, a stream  
Of strangers' faces, fading; and the bland  
Roar of the city. Nearer than a dream  
You shouldered slow beyond my flinching hand.





# Poetry and Prose

*By Carl Glick*

SHE was very pretty . . . winsome . . . with soft, dark eyes . . . and lips the colour of rubies. . . .

All days she sat at a desk in the Public Library. It was pleasant work in congenial surroundings.

Yet one morning she committed suicide. . . .

A note she left behind said, "I could endure no longer having men come to the desk and ask me if I could find them a good love story."



## A Weary Song

*By Muna Lee*

I HAVE made songs for so many light loves,  
I shall not sing of you.  
Under the rattle and clatter of words  
Silence alone speaks true.

Love is too fragile and trivial a gift,  
Too easy to do and say:  
For you I would do this greater thing,  
Keep silence, and go away.



THE man, achieving at last the first kiss, wonders when he will get the opportunity of trying again; the woman hopes his technique will be improved when next they meet.



LOVE is a disease that keeps a man ill a long while after he has been cured.





# The Clerk

By Rita Wellman

## I

HE wondered why it was that this night seemed to be the consummation of dreams, the fiery goal to which all his dreary days had yearned. All his school days, all his college days, all his business days seemed to have been lived, toilsome hour upon toilsome hour, that he might be here now, looking through this wind-down into this dance room, with the most beautiful woman he had ever seen about to meet him for their first rendezvous.

He leaped in joy from crag to crag of his past, laughing down into the dusty caverns of forgotten dull days, rejoicing that it had not been all in vain.

Here it was—*Life!*

Life was music, life was dancing, life was love! Life was wearing a new dress suit and feeling clean and tall and imposing. Life was saying in a new low voice all the wittiest things he could remember from the books he had read—oh, so laboriously! Life was a night of unexpectedness and motion and white throats and soft chiffons, and a sudden dizzy realization of being a *man!*

His name was John Thomas, and he worked as a clerk in a broker's office. Millions passed under his nose every day. It seemed as if his nose grew longer and longer in an effort to smell the good human odor of the paper bills that were always passing through his hands.

But he had a great contempt for money, as all men have who handle great quantities of it without ever possessing it. He took his little weekly

sum as a man helps himself at table to what he is able to manage, never once asking fate if he should be allowed to have more. He was a man who believed in the goodness of destiny because he was naturally very orderly, and because he had always allowed stronger minds than his own to do his thinking for him.

She was coming. He heard her laugh on the terrace beyond.

She was like a heroine in a play—a French play. She had no relation to the commonplace. She made him think of everything unattainable and expensive. When he looked at her he had a yearning for the Orient, for the songs of dancing girls, the smell of incense, and the feel of soft silks reeking with amber and musk. He had never known these things, but they were vivid in his imagination. Her eyes were brown like a deer's, with the inscrutable depths of a sublime stupidity.

"Where are you? I can't see you in the dark there."

Her voice! It nourished him as a magic Eastern potion from out of a mysterious crystal cup. As its sweetness stole over him he could feel himself bloom into beauty and importance. Life was embracing him with her velvet arms!

"Here, Mrs. Dunham. By the window here—can't you see me?"

He went forward and very deferentially took her arm and led her to the bench close by.

"I have kept you waiting. It was bad of me."

"No, I enjoyed it. That is—anticipation makes the heart grow fonder, you know."



"You have been here before, of course?"

"No. This is my first time. It was good of Mr. Neal to ask me."

"Men are so hard to get. I wonder why?"

"When there are such beautiful women around, too . . ."

She received his compliment and his gaze of admiration with dignity, as a woman should who is accustomed to such things. Her beautiful stupid eyes looked with dazzling charm into his.

He reached to touch her hand, cautiously and curiously, as a tourist might run his thick fingers over the satin surface of a superb marble.

She drew away, laughing.

"He is very rich," she said.

"Who? Oh, our host. Yes, very rich. I never knew until tonight what it means to be rich. I'd always thought it meant having too much to attend to. But tonight . . ."

"Tonight . . .?"

"Tonight I see it means having a background for life. I've always dreamed of living romantic dramas, but tonight is the first time I have realized why I never could—they must be *set*."

"Yes, they must be set. All women realize that. That is why beautiful women sell themselves for money. They owe it to themselves to have a background."

There was a pause.

They both felt that this was a little beyond them. John Thomas felt that he could not possibly live up to the color of this sort of thing, and he hoped that she could not. He admired intelligence in a woman, but it frightened him.

With charming directness she read his uneasiness.

"We sound like one of these modern novelists," she said. "Let's be plain and simple. I want you to do something for me."

This was delightful. He felt Romance beckon to him. He could run out into the garden and fight a duel for her. He would follow any servant of hers blindfold, if he but had the com-

mand from her lips. She inspired him to old-fashioned deeds which needed a great deal of courage and stupidity, and faith in a happy ending.

"Tell me. I will do anything."

"Well, I hardly know how to ask you. It's about Mr. Neal . . ."

"Our host."

"Yes. You know him well, I believe?"

"Yes. That is, as well as can be expected. I work for him."

"So I understood. I want you to arrange something . . . I want to see him again. There are so many here tonight. Will you see if it can be done? A little party—say four of us—you understand? When he is in the right mood. You men are so clever about those things—especially with your . . ."

"Employers!" he finished for her, and felt the night of dance and music and love shiver and crash as a glass palace of enchantment in a fairy tale.

How different from the gallant deeds he dreamed of! She wanted to use him!

He looked into her brown eyes, and their engaging stupidity was lost in a look of avarice and sordid intrigue. In those brilliant mirrors he saw himself shrivel into his true proportions. He saw himself the clerk again, the small, correct, mean, insignificant man who had all his life done the right thing in order that bolder men might do magnificent wrong things.

"I will do what I can," he said.

It was the exact answer he made daily to his employer.

She pressed his hand.

"Thank you. That is so good of you. I knew you were like that. That is why I chose you, you from all the others."

He knew why she had chosen him, because he was the safest, the most impressionable, the most insignificant, the one for whom she had the least respect.

She remained with him, but the soft gleam had gone from her eyes; in its place was a glitter, the winking flash of a planet evolving through space



alight with the purpose of its own destiny.

He made no protest when she rose to go, winding her long, silky, tassely things about her, making ready like a splendid ship starting on a fresh voyage of triumph.

"Good evening, and thank you. We understand each other perfectly. I never knew anyone with whom I felt so much in sympathy."

And she was gone. She left him despising himself. His dreary, commonplace days weighed about his neck in a chain of despair. Oh, why was he ever born? A dazzling light of pitiless truth seemed to search him out in the dark, to expose ruthlessly his puny, scrawny stooped frame, his meek eyes, his long, docile nose, his whole uninteresting, insignificant, contemptible self.

He looked in upon the dancers. His lower legs ached with bitterness. Young men, no less stupid than he, but crowned with health and vitality and self-belief. Each had chosen some young girl. Each would pursue his desire, or caprice, as far as he wished or was allowed, but each would know some sweet thing, a hasty kiss, a modest, reluctant refusal, a dizzy approach to conquest. God, what would he not give for such things as this! No woman had ever looked upon him except with the utmost politeness, women who are always rude to the men they fear. He turned away and walked down into the garden. Bitter was his soul, bitter, bitter!

His desire for the love of woman exceeded all mere physical hunger; wrapped in it was his desire for life itself, for poetry, for beauty, for knowledge. He whimpered in the dark as weak things do, afraid even to make the honest sounds of pain.

"Man!" he muttered to himself. "I call myself a *man*! Thing! Idiot! Fool! Worm!"

He ran down the driveway. He was going home—to hide.

He hated his suburb with its neat and respectable homes in which neat and respectable clerks lived careful lives balancing on the line between poverty

and dishonesty. It had an eternal odor of canned tomato soup.

On the train he opened a magazine. The magazine offered to him and his kind the thrills which avoided them in life, but he had no desire to read now, and the movement hurt his eyes.

He turned the leaves at the back. His eye, as it was meant to do, was caught by the words:

## BE A MAN

He read further.

ARE YOU INSIGNIFICANT,  
PALE, THIN, TIMID—NO  
VITALITY?  
DOES THE LOVE OF WOMAN  
PASS YOU BY?  
DO YOU LONG TO BE MAG-  
NETIC? ATTRACTIVE?  
VIRILE?

It was like the voice of God heard in the desert of despair.

He read the rest of the advertisement with hungry eyes. His heart pounded and resounded in his ears. He thrilled with excitement. He was going to answer the advertisement that night. He was going to learn how to be magnetic, attractive, virile.

He got off at his station like a man in a dream. He no longer smelled the canned tomato soup. He walked with sovereign pity up the narrow concrete sidewalk with its neat, doll-like houses on either side, where a few persistent victrolas complained into the night.

Tomorrow he would enter a new world.

## II

JOHN THOMAS spent all of his spare time obeying the commands of the correspondence god who had called to him; all his spare money was spent in propitiation. His mysterious teacher in the West had sent him his portrait, a formidable-looking portrait of chest proportions and arm and leg muscles which made John Thomas sigh in de-



spairing admiration. He slipped this picture into his mirror and every night made comparisons; bitter as these were, he worked hard, and being methodical and careful in everything, obeyed instructions to the letter.

He was rewarded. The glorious day came when he could no longer button his vest.

This day was followed by others of even greater triumph, when he could stand before the mirror and face the picture without shame. He had achieved a chest! For the first time since he was born he knew what it was to draw a deep breath of life.

His absorption in his "treatment" made him preoccupied at work. He made a grave mistake on the books. Mr. Neal sent for him to appear in the inner office, where a man faced an enormous unshaded window, an empty, unsympathetic mahogany desk, and Mr. Neal's little steel eyes.

"Mr. Thomas, they tell me that it was you who made that mistake in the account last week. Is that true?"

"Yes, sir. I am sorry, sir."

"See that it doesn't occur again."

Mr. Neal's little scalpel eyes, in the shadows, observed him curiously, exposed as he was to the cruel light from the high window.

"Why, you've changed, Thomas," he said. "You've grown bigger—every way. I'd scarcely know you."

"Yes, sir," Thomas answered, and moved to the other foot.

It made him very proud. Even Mr. Neal. . . . But he was worried. He shouldn't neglect business. He had a bad memory. He must give all his attention to details or—what might happen?

Going home in the train, he turned over the leaves of his magazine. Shouting at him were the words:

HAVE YOU A BAD  
MEMORY?

He read on:

DO YOU FORGET THINGS?

DOES YOUR SUCCESS IN  
BUSINESS DEPEND UPON  
YOUR MEMORY? LEARN TO  
REMEMBER EVERYTHING  
YOU NEED TO.

He answered the advertisement that night.

With the same persistence and faith with which he had set about developing his muscles, he now set about to develop his memory. In a few weeks he could remember everything he wanted to. In a few months he could forget nothing.

In the meantime his physical development went on until the calves of his legs were knotted and full like the trunks of oak trees, and his chest so broad and deep that he pounded it every few minutes in order to hear the reassuring answer from it.

He scarcely knew himself now. New, unlooked-for developments seemed to have taken place. New longings arose within him. He who had always been bullied and mocked by other men now had a desire to taste the sweets of mastery himself. The punching bag which he beat every day grew to bore him. He wanted to *hurt* when he punched.

He found his great chest leading him to places where there were other great chests, equally pugnacious. The longing to fight grew almost unbearable.

Finally one night the opportunity arrived.

There was a man who talked out of the side of his mouth who wanted a fight. John Thomas, trembling in his soul, got to his feet, impelled, almost inspired, by his new muscles. The two faced each other, and the stranger laughed, a loud, coarse, derisive laugh which shook John Thomas to the core. They fought. John Thomas was no fighter. He had always been a good apologist. Now he struck out blindly with the fury of fear. The other man's contemptuous self-reliance was no match for John Thomas's panic-stricken ferocity.

The fight ended with John victorious, his body covered with the other man's blood. They made him a hero, but he



ran away in shame. The sound of the other man's yielding flesh sickened him. He felt his new strong arms curiously; how alive and wilful they had been, like independent things with souls of their own! He wondered where they would lead him.

The next day a short man in a checked suit came to him and offered to back him as a "club" prize-fighter. In spite of himself his chest made him answer "yes." It longed for more blood.

### III

THE love of woman had been offered as a reward for his labors by the advertisement, but as yet none had come to him. Then at last, when he was least expecting her, she appeared in an old coat and a hat which almost concealed her.

She was as beautiful as the white wood flowers which belong to a race of parasites, living on the vitality of sturdier neighbors. She was very young and very pure, and planning a comfortable future for herself. Her white beauty caught him up with a gasp. His chest led him nearer her. Her skin was cool and waxy, and its fragrance intoxicated him. He longed to tear her apart, petal by petal, to discover the honey gold core of her heart.

His chest did his wooing for him. It was fierce and savage and masterful. Behind it his heart trembled. He marveled at the ease with which it conquered. For only a few days it had to rage and heave, and then at last the little flower was caught against it and bruised, until her protests grew less and less and fainter and fainter until they came no longer.

And so one day John Thomas awoke and found against his chest a golden head, innocently sleeping. He looked down in wonder at the face pressed against his heart, a violet-shadowed face of weakness and fascination and subtle sinful innocence.

He trembled in his inmost soul. Where had his powerful new body led

him? What was he to do with this frail burden of silk and pearl and weak clingingness? Love! He knew nothing of love. He had never learned how. He knew only how to be strong—and how to remember.

He who had always known what it is to be a slave now knew the more uncomfortable sensation of having one. Wherever he went she followed, a white shadow from a new moon, small and feeble. If he spoke she listened—hungrily. If he was silent she waited—patiently. When he was angry she suffered—silently. When he was gay she watched—reverently. Her thin white arms were always outstretched to him as if for life. When allowed they clung desperately; when thrown off they waited—and then clung again.

He dreaded the sight of her. He abandoned her again and again, leaving her watching after him like a forlorn white kitten. But she always found him again, and waited, suffering and silent, and then she would cling again like the white parasites of the woods.

His life grew miserable. He could not sleep at night with the throbbing of his terrible memory, which would not allow him to forget anything, which kept him reviewing everything he had seen and said and heard, over and over again, and with the cloying weight of her thin self coiled about his soul. He no longer dreamed of romance. He no longer longed for importance. He thought only of escape.

Not long afterward, turning to his oracle, the advertisement pages of the magazines, he read the words:

ARE YOU IN TROUBLE?  
IS YOUR SOUL OPPRESSED?  
IS YOUR BURDEN TOO HEAVY  
TO BEAR?  
GIVE YOUR SOUL TO GOD.  
LEARN TO SPEAK TO HIM.  
HE IS THE ONE LAW AND  
CONSOLATION.

He sighed—and answered the advertisement.



Through the mail religion came to him steadily and softly like wings in the night. He grew thin and pale and uplifted. His lusty companions of the ring deserted in panic—it was whispered that he was dying of a mysterious disease. His white flower wilted against his shrinking breast—and vanished. He was left alone.

Every mail brought him fresh triumph for the soul. As his mind turned to immaterial things his persecuting memory left him. He lived in the spirit and grew very silent and strange and poor.

One day, scarcely able to walk, murmuring a prayer to the Correspondent's god, he found himself, through habit, walking into the offices of Mr. Neal. As he seemed feeble and harmless, they allowed him into the private office of Mr. Neal himself.

Mr. Neal, who prided himself on remembering faces, called out:

"Why, I do believe it's Thomas. What has happened to you?"

"Religion," was the faint answer. "May I—come back?"

"Why, yes, Thomas. We need you. You were always a reliable man."

"Yes, sir. All but once. I've missed you, sir. I never realized it. I've missed being reliable. When shall I start?"

"Tomorrow? Say tomorrow at nine, as usual?"

"Yes, sir. Tomorrow at nine—as usual."

As he was walking out he smiled at the new stenographer, his old smile of self-respect for the unattainable. Several of the old clerks remembered him, and he answered their good-natured superiority with his old good-natured obsequiousness.

He left the office feeling happy and natural at last, as if waking from a bad dream. He longed for tomorrow. For, although he had achieved a prodigious chest measurement and a miraculous memory, and had inspired a great passion, he had, to the last, the soul of a clerk.



**A** LIBI:—The ability to prove that you were not committing a particular indiscretion at a certain time and place by showing you were committing another indiscretion at the same time at another place.



**A** MAN is down and out when he wonders where his next meal is coming from. A woman, when she wonders where her next kiss is coming from.



**T**HERE are two kinds of women, marriageable women and those whom it is safe to be affable to.



**T**HE Three Graces:—Faith, Hope, and Disappointment.



# In Court

*By Milnes Levick*

UPON the dark and polished surface of the counsel's table a hand, with the fingertips bunched, keeps up a meaningless rhythm of taps. A hand dirtied by prison, a hand with split and crumpled nails, a fell of hair, the moist palm deeply lined. The fingers impinging upon the table make a little flash of reflection upon the expensive veneer and leave a cloudy smudge like the imprint of a child. It is a hand with no deftness, yet an instrument of rough emotion, even passion, one for blows no less than caresses.

Beside it another hand: the long, crafty fingers stroke a folded scrap of paper persistently, soothingly, and yet almost negligently. Once it pauses to fleck an infinitesimal spot of dust conspicuous in a beam of light and the sunlight emphasizes the intricacy of tiny wrinkles in the soft white skin, the polish of the nails, the fastidiousness of the tips and the adroitness of the thumb, poised in prehensile wariness. Smaller than the finest grain of sand, the speck of dust is yet a weighty matter, to be rid of with due formality, to be dropped as into eternal space with an unimpassioned gesture of forensic prudence.

On the other side of the hand that taps—upon the prosecution's side of the table—a hand squat and powerful hangs carelessly, the thumb tucked into the armhole of a waistcoat. The fingers are spread out upon the cloth and occasionally they move lazily but with deliberation, like water rippling under the force that makes a wave: the index falls back last, with vigorous finality, as if driving home the State's contentions.

Above all these, upon the bench, two

suave, sedate and punctilious hands, over-small, having a complacent delicacy as of finesse in the splitting of hairs. Behind papers, pens, a stack of law books, they hold open a magazine, turning the pages with indolent heedlessness, pausing at an inconsequential illustration. Leisurely and righteous, they would shrink from the harsh contact of hemp.

Behind the railing are other hands, of women as well as men. One, pink with compression, bulges at the palm of the champagne-coloured glove that clings to its pudgy folds tighter than skin itself; it raises a lorgnette in ungraceful condescension, the little finger curved with supercilious curiosity. Two others, gloved also, lie side by side upon a lap, ready to applaud, as at a *matinée*.

Hard by another hand, in a glove, is prone upon the arm of a chair, flaccid as if weary with literal attempts to grasp a fact. The glove is black and old: manifold flecks of bluish gray reveal the substance of the leather; there is a weak stain from ink, applied to hide a still anterior discoloration, and where a rip has been closed the wide and wavering stitches contrast with the firm machine work. The hand is not large, yet the paper-thin glove puckers apathetically over hollows. The tips of the fingers rest upon a handkerchief the coarseness of whose texture is advertised by the faded black of the border.

In the next row of seats a plump pair of homely hands, crinkled and red with the accumulated years—with the bathing of babies, the mending of knickerbockers, the gentle smiling wisdom of



stowing surprises in lunch pails, and again the bathing of babies. They are clasped now so tight the damp fingers protrude with clear-cut zones of white and pink, yet they quiver for all the desperation of their clutch.

By them, still two more: young, yet old, ungraceful, scarred, the knuckles already enlarged and severely lined. Uneasily between them, like a live thing struggling for release, a tear-damp rag of cloth is tortured.

Other hands, row upon row: men's, idle, relaxed, expressionless; fanning, wiping foreheads, fumbling at watch-chains, resting upon knees in mockery of the attitude of protesting joviality or reaching along the backs of neighbors' seats. But out of them a pair immense and gnarled, speckled with grime ground into the large pores, with square stained nails: these are tensed and immobile upon the back of a chair.

Now new hands, the foreman's: purplish, round and shiny like sausages. On one finger with unkempt scarfskin a fat gold ring. This hand is mottled unhealthily and as it hangs there slips over it a glistening cylindrical cuff; the red-gold link is no less massive than the ring. The other hand, upraised, awk-

wardly holds a paper, on which is written, "We, the jury . . ."

Instantly all the preoccupied hands brush away the trivial business of tedium. The pallid ones upon the bench cast aside the magazine and fold themselves with smug, sophisticated expectancy. The dextrous hand at the counsel's table reluctantly abandons its folded bit of paper for an alert repose; that upon the opposite side deserts the armpit and shuts with the emphasis of foreknowledge. Beyond, the shabby black glove flutters, plucking futilely at the black-bordered handkerchief, and in the next row of seats a compassionate younger hand, already aged, closes spasmodically upon two red old hands as they fall into an attitude instinct with supplication. Behind, the two great square fists on the back of a chair grip it as if to wrench it free, till the knuckles blanch.

At the table within the railing the rhythmic hand ceases its tattoo but is not stilled, for it quivers with the jerk of the pulse. Under the thick hair upon the back the veins swell in their blue courses. Ten times it shakes with the little violent starts of the heart-beat, and then it subsides, whitened and nerveless.



**L**OTS of girls have had so many affairs of the heart that their hearts are in a condition closely resembling cauliflower ear.



**E**VERY woman hopes to find a man who is irretrievably bad, and to make him, by one electric glance, incurably good.



**M**ARRIAGE:—Giving in, giving up, giving over and giving out.





# The Dream

*By Muna Lee*

"I SHOULD have known," he said humbly, "that I could not keep it from you."

She felt a tremulous comfort in this admittance of her nearness to his thought, and a sense of dismay—which amounted to physical illness—that her shrinking doubt was confirmed.

She had not really known: he over-rated her intuition. She had feared; and her whole nervous strength had forced itself to a steady voicing as fact the fear that tormented her. She had expected and craved denial. Instead there had come stark admittance.

She did not speak now, but waited. His words came awkwardly at first, a little harsh, then in a relieved confessional rush. He was curiously unused to lying.

"If you can see how it was—at first we always talked of you—she was so unhappy—and had nobody—"

"Her husband?" the dry query formed itself on her lips, but, staring at him dumbly, she left it unuttered.

"I swear I tried to leave—once I did leave, and had to go back because Roberts was sick. She took care of him. She took care of everybody. Then she had to go to her people to wait until Blount finished his contract and could take her with him. That was two years ago—eighteen months before I came home. That's the whole story. I haven't seen her since. I shall never see her again."

She spoke at last, hardly above a whisper:

"I felt the change in your letters. They came so much oftener—so different.

"When were you sure?" he demanded with sudden curiosity.

"Oh—I knew," she said vaguely. "And all that time you wrote without meaning what you said?"

"I meant it," he answered impatiently. "I didn't realize at first that I loved her—I wanted to get away and think. Then, on shipboard, coming home, it came over me—"

"You understand that you are free?" she asked gravely.

"Oh, free—" he shrugged away from the responsibility of decision which freedom entailed. "I love you—I love her. You think me a scoundrel, I suppose."

Struck by the novelty of his own suggestion, he turned to her with egoistic harshness:

"What do you think of me?" he demanded, his voice rising sharply on the question.

She smiled, feeling infinitely calmer and older than he should ever be.

"You were a boy. Do you think I could blame a boy for anything? And if you have found someone you love more, the fault is in me. I wish you loved me, but we cannot control these things. We must face the situation as it is."

"You still care?" he asked doubtfully.

Again she smiled.

"I am not worth it!" he said.

"Probably not," she agreed. "But love is hardly a matter of value received."

She was trying hard to keep quiet, controlled; conscious that so long as she remained mistress of herself she



was mistress of the situation and of him.

He turned toward her with a characteristic gesture of flamboyant helplessness.

"What shall we do? I love you more than you believe. I need you. But I cannot lie about what she means in my heart."

"Of course not," she acquiesced. "Let me think."

When she spoke again after a brief silence, her words struck him as inconsequential, lacking in the emotional quality which the situation demanded.

"How long did you know her?"

"She and Blount were there for four or five months," he said shortly. "Then she left, as I told you. But time—" his voice trailed off indignantly.

"Let me think," she repeated, and looked ahead where night lay under the elms like a pool. But this was merely to gain time; for, like a man in the clutches of death, she had thought even while she spoke.

She knew him so well. It was a dream that enthralled, a dream she must conquer; and certain knowledge of what the situation demanded was born in her. Reality blots out a dream. He believed he loved someone else; she knew it was herself he loved. He, too, must be made to realize this.

There was only one way to make him realize: he must see this other woman again with eyes cleared of illusion. A boyish memory was in his mind, transformed by the unreasoning poetry of his imagination into a rival impossible to meet. But with a woman of flesh and blood she could hold her own. Once he found the difference between fact and vision, he would return as to a haven. But he must go, he must be made to see! She felt such a sensation as must visit Deity snaring the feet of the prodigal into devious paths of return.

Her voice was very gentle.

"We must consider her, too. It is not a question to be decided by one for three, but for three by two. She herself—"

"Don't you see," he interrupted, "that circumstances make it impossible for us to think of each other except as two people foredoomed to meet and separate?"

She winced a little from the "us" in which she had no part, but rallied quickly to counter his argument.

"The woman you love must always be considered. She needs you. She needs the spiritual strength that comes from the assurance of being loved. You should go to her, let her know she can always depend on your love. Then if you think best come away. But a woman craves tangible evidence—let her see you again. It is her right to know what she means in your life."

"She does know," he said, half-angrily.

Again she winced, almost noticeably.

"A woman doubts," she told him, "so long away. She cannot be sure after so many months. And you said she was lonely, unhappy— Do you write to her?"

By sheer effort of will the question seemed incidental.

"I write to Blount." His answer came unwillingly. "She probably sees some of the letters."

"And she writes?"

"It has been a long time since her last letter." His reluctance increased. "And just now, of course, her little girl is extremely ill."

"Then don't you see," she urged, "that if she is in trouble and hasn't sent you any word—"

"Oh, there were messages in Blount's letters," he muttered.

"Any direct word, then—it is because of a doubt, a pain, creeping in on her own mind. You owe it to her to let her know that through everything she can trust your love, she can believe in that. A woman must believe in something. Don't tell her anything if you prefer not. She can tell without any words if you love her. There's no unfairness to her husband, to your friend, in this, for you and she have already declared yourselves to each other. There could



be no unfairness anyway. Love cannot be anything but a strengthening and purifying force. It cannot harm anyone for her to have her confidence in you renewed. And even if it should, love cannot consider any third person. It is not right that it should."

To herself her words rang hollow, desperate, with a mocking and betraying semblance of sincerity. But he was listening half-convinced—desirous to be convinced, she realized bitterly—and she went on rapidly, with the nervous eagerness of a mother who is trying to hold the attention of a sick child.

"Why not see her—it will be easy to arrange for a consultation with Blount—"

"Oh, yes," he assented absently. "Blount really wants to get my idea on some of his arrangements for the next exhibition. He has written for me to come. But I felt that I must not see her again."

"But you must! She has a right to know that you are unchanged, unchangeable—"

The words sounded in her own ears like a clatter of ironic laughter, but he listened gravely.

"Then come back. And if you still feel you need me, I love you, Jim—"

Her voice wavered a little, but she caught herself and went on:

"At any rate, you will have my friendship, and so shall she, even though we shall never know each other. But go to her, dear. It is your duty."

And stunning her with the completeness and ease of her victory,

"I will go," he said.

## II

HE left within a few days.

"Don't bother to write," she told him.

"And don't let yourself feel grieved about me. It is all right."

And when he had kissed her then with a certain loving pity and said, "I will stay if you tell me," she had conquered the desperate temptation to take him at his word and had repeated quietly,

"You must go."

She lived through the weeks until he should come again, feverishly, anxiously, yet with a relieved certainty of the outcome.

It was all so natural as to have been inevitable, she told herself sternly in moments of rebellion. During that long period of absence he had been hardly more than a boy, lonely, in a foreign city; she had been too young to realize how her own childishly unsympathetic letters must alienate him; of course his nature had responded gratefully to this woman of kindly manners and lovely face who had tried to forget her loneliness of heart in soothing his. For the woman herself, curiously enough, she felt no resentment.

"Jim idealized her," she thought, "and any woman would want to take care of him—would love him," she added passionately to herself.

She gloated over her own manifest and manifold advantages. The event was sure. She had seen a sketch of Mrs. Blount, made at the time when Jim knew her. Even then the eyes had been a little hard. They would be harder now. And that seven years' seniority of hers of which Jim seemed forgetful should be apparent by this time. And when he realized his own love had merely been a diverting incident in a weary woman's life—a slight pain, a slight joy, a means of forgetting!

"It will hurt him terribly at first," she realized, "then he will remember me and be glad."

And she wept to picture his homecoming, somewhat saddened, somewhat chastened, but happy in the confidence of her welcome.

"I shall never fail him," she promised herself proudly.

Toward the last few days of his absence her confidence deepened to triumph. Her faith in love and truth and indomitable fact would save him, would save them both. She felt intensely that it would always save them; that life would be powerless to batter down this bulwark thrown about their love. Even



he would be glad to forego a shade, a vagueness, for the proud and dominant reality.

When the day arrived, she went down alone to meet him, in a serenity of confidence that was deeper than joy. The crowd seemed to fall away from him as figures faded out in a vision. She was conscious of nothing but his face, with its curious new intent look, as of one who has found the peace of an eternal certainty. He came directly toward her. His face was paler, finer,

she noted, as she waited, terrified, for him to speak.

He looked at her a moment, then beyond her as at a sublime and awing vision.

When he did speak, it was with a new tone, the tone of the poet who is also seer and mystic:

"You were right," he said. "My love for her was a holy and deathless thing. Thank God, you did not let me falter from it. She died three days before I got there."



## Dusk

*By David Morton*

YOU are remembered where this dusk drifts through,  
 That touches me with dim, unquiet hands,  
 And lays upon my heart a want of you,  
 Tender like twilights on old lovely lands.  
 No grievous longing shakes me in its grip,  
 No tugging need that will not let me be,  
 But quiet like the quiet of a ship  
 That dreams of home-lands lying oversea.

The shore-line darkens, darkens too the sky,  
 Where one by one the punctual stars come through,  
 Mirrored along the margins where they lie. . . .  
 The late light fades . . . and leaves this want of you,  
 Touching my heart with dim, unquiet hands,  
 Like twilights fallen on forgotten lands.



WHENEVER a man disappears, it is a sign that he is either running away with a woman—or from one.



LONG engagements should be avoided. They lead to marriage.





# Deo Optimo Maximo

By Han Ryner

**L'**HOMME *parle*:

O Dieu, tu ne saurais m'entendre, et pourtant je te parle. Comme il m'arrive de parler à Hélène, à don Quichotte, à Faust, ou à quelque autre de mes fils.

Mais à plusieurs de mes fils je parle en me glorifiant, car je leur ai donné le trésor d'immortalité.

Toi à qui je n'ai su donner que la pauvre éternité, je te parle en humilité inquiète.

O mon fils que j'appelais Père, je n'ai pas su te créer viable, et, voici que tu es mort.

Lorsque je te créai Dieu, je ne savais pas bien ce que je voulais.

Ou plutôt je voulais trop de choses, et contradictoires.

Je voulais satisfaire mon imagination et son ambitieuse pauvreté. C'est pourquoi je t'ai donné l'unité.

Je voulais flatter mon intelligence, et sa paresse, et son besoin de s'arrêter. Pour croire que je comprenais le monde, je t'ai donné la toute-puissance et je t'ai appelé Créateur.

Je voulais apaiser mon cœur, et je t'ai donné justice et bonté.

Hélas! je t'ai vu bientôt chanceler sous le poids de tant de présents.

Ni toi, mon Rêve, ni moi, mes Mains, n'avons pu faire que le monde réel soit juste et bon.

Longtemps j'ai refusé d'avouer mon erreur, et j'ai soutenu ton chancellement de mille appuis subtils.

Je t'ai déclaré trop grand pour que je te puisse comprendre. Et mon intelligence est redevenue insatisfaite.

Je me suis affirmé que les mots "bonté" et "justice" n'avaient plus le

même sens quand je parle de toi, immense, ou de moi, infime. Mais je me suis aperçu que je ne savais plus ce que je disais, et mon cœur a recommencé de pleurer.

Et je t'ai vu mourir, écrasé sous le poids de mes présents.

J'avais voulu te donner tout le réel et tout l'Idéal.

Mais le réel et l'idéal sont de farouches ennemis, et ils t'ont, déchiré dans le combat qui ne finira point.

Pour te sauver, j'ai renoncé à l'impossible unité. Je t'ai fait double, ô Ormuzd-Ahrimane, ô Dieu blanc et Dieu noir.

Mais le monde n'est-il fait que de blanc et de noir?

Ou plutôt y a-t-il du blanc et du noir, du bien et du mal, avant que ma pensée, en les classant, déformé les faits et les choses?

O Dieu, que je te fasse un ou que je te fasse deux, je ne te donne la vie en moi qu'en y tuant le monde.

Un, Deux, je vous créai en violant le Multiple d'un baiser que je crus victorieux.

Mon baiser n'embrassa que le nuage et ne créa que des chimères.

Lorsque je veux comprendre un peu de réel, je suis condamné à vous résoudre dans le Multiple.

Lorsque je veux créer un peu d'idéal et d'amour, c'est mon cœur seul que je puis créer.

Lorsque je veux croire à l'Unique, je ne sais plus si je crois en toi ou si je crois en moi.

Mais je te regarde et je me regarde. Mon unité est une harmonie que je dois refaire chaque jour.



Ton unité est un rêve qui fuit ; lorsque j'en parle, je trébuche aux mêmes mots que lorsque je parle du néant.

O Dieu-Néant, ô mon fils mal venu, je t'aime pourtant et je te dois quelque chose.

Comme j'aime toutes mes erreurs et comme je dois quelque chose à toutes mes erreurs.

Chaque erreur que j'épouse, mon bon vouloir la rend grosse de quelque vérité, et la mère douloureuse meurt dans le travail de l'enfantement.

Toi, Dieu, la plus chère de mes erreurs, les longues méditations dont t'embrassa mon amour m'ont appris bien des choses :

L'Un est le besoin et le rêve de mon imagination. Je lui souris et le caresse au ciel de poésie.

Mais je l'écarte—car son éblouissement me rendrait aveugle—dès que je

descends sur la terre de l'observation et de l'induction.

Les Causes sont indifférentes au rêve de mon imagination comme, hélas ! aux désirs de mon cœur.

Autant que l'unité, elles ignorent la justice et la bonté.

Je veux créer un peu d'unité et de beauté. Mais ce sera dans mes œuvres harmonieuses, et ce sera en moi, la plus importante et la plus difficile de mes œuvres.

Je veux qu'il y ait le plus possible de divin dans le monde ;

Mais je ne puis créer que mon cœur d'indulgence et de bonté active ;

Et grandir un peu ma puissance, chaque fois que les moyens de son agrandissement ne diminueront pas mon cœur, et ma bonté qui se donne, et mon indulgence qui sourit en se retenant de pleurer.



## A Forest Rendezvous

*By William Griffith*

THEY said someone was waiting ;  
And at the trysting oak,  
Sudden enchanting voices  
Leaf-lightly spoke.

Daylong she had been coming,  
And all the forest sang  
Of beauty : elfin-softly  
The blue-bells rang.

Nightlong she was in shadow,  
She who went away  
As the moon does in the silver  
Veils of day.

I see no course to follow,  
Alas, nor where to find  
The silver way she vanished,  
Being blind.



# Dreiser's Play—and Some Others

By George Jean Nathan

IT is called "The Hand of the Potter." Announced for production by the Coburns, it remains still between book covers. Arthur Hopkins has said that it is the best American play that has been submitted to him and that he would eagerly have produced it had not Dreiser imposed upon him so many bulls, caveats and salvos. Mencken, Dreiser's most faithful critical mount, private shimmy dancer and rajpoot at large, says that Hopkins is crazy and that it is one of the worst American plays he has read. Burton Rascoe, Chicago's leading journalistic professor of the arts, informs me that it has made a considerable impression upon him; Tarquinius Ramgunga Smith, erudite *sposo* to the *Century*, has said the same; the theatrical producers, aside from Hopkins, to whom the manuscript was submitted have observed that it is, in their estimation, largely whim-wham. It has given birth to boisterous palm pounders, tin-sheet shakers and shillabers on the right hand, and to nose wrinklers, tongue stickers and loud sneezers on the left. I find myself occupying a position in the no-man's land stretching between the two camps—but rather far to the left.

The story of a victim of a certain phase of Kraft-Ebbing demoralization—one has a sneaking suspicion that the late Leo Frank case may in a general way have suggested the theme to the author—Dreiser has written a play whose chief merit (as it is ever one of Dreiser's most notable assets) consists in the achievement, in the very teeth of life's low derisory comedy, of a poignant and tragic pity. This deep com-

passion, this summoning forth, honestly and soundly, of forbearance, this is the note Dreiser can strike as few other Americans can strike it. Out of the tin of the grotesque, the ignoble and the mean, he can evoke the golden E flat of human frailty and charity as few modern Europeans can evoke it. And yet with never a suspicion of the bogus "heart interest" that passes promiscuously for the currency of art, with never a suspicion of slyly studied fact bluepencilling or of self-compromise. From "Sister Carrie" down through "Jennie Gerhardt" and, with but a few skips, on to "Twelve Men," one encounters always this grim and understanding heart upon a hilltop, at once moved and immobile, at once condemning and forgiving: without sentimentality as without imperturbation. You will find it, perhaps at its most eloquent, in his chapter, "My Brother Paul"—"And you, my good brother! Here is the story that you wanted me to write, this little testimony to your memory, a pale, pale symbol of all I think and feel"—a really first-rate, immensely realistic and affecting arrangement of the jigsaw of the eternal marriage of the ridiculous and the gentle. And though the amalgam of heart and eye, the one warm and the other cold, dresses his play not so convincingly, it is yet there to breathe into the work a something that in its absence would have left the play a mere third-rate Third Avenue melodramatic mossback diddler not much above the quality of such dime magnets of yesterday as "Devil's Island."

The dramatist Dreiser is the preco-



cious bad boy of the novelist Dreiser: that offspring of the artist who looks upon the stage as a neighbour's apple orchard wherein to penetrate by night enveloped in a bed-spread, scare off with sepulchral groans the watchful Spitz, and make away with the pippins. The bed-spread and the groans are apparent in each of the various short plays that Dreiser has written, as they are doubly apparent (Dreiser has doubtless grown tired of waiting and wishes to "knock 'em off their seats" now or never) in this, his first long play. The girl stretched out in the coffin, the fourth dimensional dramaturgy with its divers laughing gases, the violent sensationalism of the defloration of eleven year old Kitty Neafie by the degenerate Berchansky—this is the crescendo Dreiser box-office attack; the last in particular the do-or-die dive against the Rialto show pews. And what is more, if the Coburns put on the play down in the Greenwich Village Theater—away from Broadway—I somehow feel that its scandalous air will presently draw to it enough of jay Broadway to make Dreiser the money upon which he had his eye when he wrote it. For that Dreiser wrote the play with a Rolls-Royce in view seems to me as certain as that he writes his novels with nothing in view but the novels.

"The Hand of the Potter" has three extremely effective theatrical scenes: the attack scene at the conclusion of the first act (in effect similar to the scene at the conclusion of the first act of a prize play of twenty years ago called "Chivalry"); the scene in the second act wherein the suspicions and fears of the mother and father of the demented boy tremble upon their lips; and the scene wherein the crazed, pursued pervert closes the door against the child Hagar and demoniac temptation. I am probably unfair to Dreiser when I bluntly characterize these scenes as mere stage melodrama: there is something more to them than merely that. But that they were initially conceived less for their intrinsic relevance and in-

tegrity than for their more obvious yokel-power, I somehow can't disbelieve. Conceived otherwise, their brazen baldness, for all the well-known stubborn and eccentric hand that executed them, must have taken on at least a show of the reticence that is currently nowhere visible.

The balance of the manuscript reveals here and there a touch or two of moderately good characterization, but little more. The structure of the play is disjointed and awkward. The third act, jumping à la Hal Reid from the Berchansky flat to the grand jury room of the Criminal Courts Building, invades the continuity of the action: the third act might better have followed up the action of the preceding act after a slight lapse of time, in the locale of that act. The long monologues of the insane boy, though logical and sound enough, are repetitious and tiresome. The German dialect of such a straight character as Emil Daubenspeck—"ich vuss by a liddle chob in Sixty-fift' Sthreet und vuss going down troo der lot py Fairst Affenoo back of mein house da"—smacks rebelliously of Sam Bernard, as the "I can't give you her exack langwidge . . . she was kinda nervous an' a-fidgitin' with 'er hands this-a-way" of such a straight character as Rufus Bush smacks of William Hodge and as the Irish McKagg's "devil a bits" and "sure, ye'll be afther sayin's" suggest the Russell Brothers and the Yiddish Berchansky's "oi, oi's," "ach's" and sedulous use of the "v" sound suggest Ben Welch.

The play, in brief, though probably a financial success if handled with a sufficiently cunning showmanship, falls short on a score of counts. It has a touch of the great and gorgeous pity; it has twenty touches of the great and gorgeous whangdoodle. It belongs very largely to the Dreiser who writes for the Saturday Evening Post and goes to see Henry B. Walthall in the moving pictures; it is not the work of the Theodore Dreiser who has written some of America's finest novels. *That* Dreiser could never seriously have written such



an idiotic scene, for example, as that of the newspaper reporters' colloquy in the last act: not unless he appreciated the idiocy of a Broadway theatrical audience as well as I.

## II

MORE and more, the librettists who contribute to the witlessness of our music show stage appear to become convinced of their inability to pitch their salt higher than a joke on Brooklyn or the Subway, and to seek with a clumsy facetiousness to conceal their shortcomings. Commissioned by a producer to prepare the book for a music show, and aware that to attempt to write such a book would be a lugubrious giveaway, they indulge by manner of self-protection in all sorts of laboured and painfully obvious flim-flam. This flim-flam, patterned amateurishly after the droll irony made familiar by George M. Cohan some years ago both in his librettos and in the farces which he wrote or rewrote, presently takes the form of a heavy jocularly at the librettist's own expense, a self-spoofing designed to forestall criticism. Though, true enough, the dodge contrives generally to bamboozle the Rialto nose-rubbers, it is beginning to offer an ascending testimony to the fact that the American librettist is rapidly rivaling the British as a chambermaid of the sour.

Such a music show as "The Greenwich Village Follies"—almost any current music show like the "Scandals of 1919" or the "Gaieties of 1919" will serve quite as well—illustrates clearly the ubiquitous wile. The librettist, getting his contract for the job and being informed by the producer in a general way of the "artists" who will have to be supplied with material, promptly removes his coat, inserts a Fatima, and proceeds to try to execute the desired number of sharp burlesque and satirical scenes and episodes. In due time, after much scalp scratching, he succeeds brilliantly in satirizing some such thing as prohibition by very cleverly naming the

chorus girls after the different soft drinks and probably even in burlesquing the omnipresent court-room drama by causing the judge to cry out "Order in the court-room!" and bringing the prosecuting attorney epigrammatically to rejoin, "I'll have a high-ball." But, though so far so good, he now finds himself confounded. What to do? He has succeeded magnificently thus far, but thus far is patently not far enough. He removes his waistcoat, sheathes another Fatima, and has at the job again. For his stinging but mayhap not sufficiently developed prohibition satire he now fashions an apophthegm on Bevo and hits upon the further happy notion of dressing up one of the chorus boys to look like William Jennings Bryan. And for his humorously biting court-room drama burlesque he evolves a subtle and timely lampoon in the shape of a jurymen who bends so far over to get a slant at the exposed calf of the soubrette playing the plaintiff that he falls out of the jury box. But even this, excellent as it is, the librettist finds scarcely sufficient for a full evening's entertainment; and he removes now his chemise, imbeds another Fatima, and is once more off. Further inspiration, however, he finds lacking. Alas, one cannot push inspiration too far! And soon it dawns upon him sadly that he will have to lay his admirable half-finished prohibition satire and his equally admirable half-finished court-room drama burlesque aside—forsooth, have not such as Swift and Sterne, too, had to lay aside temporarily their "Gullivers" and "Sentimental Journeys" until fancy came to them again?—and, laying them aside, take another tack.

But what tack to take? Aye, there's the rub! There ain't no tack. A librettist brought up to write prohibition satires in which a chorus girl named Grape Juice brandishes a sword labelled "Act of Congress" and chases another chorus girl named Rum back into the wings and court-room drama burlesques in which the burlesque consists chiefly in the district attorney's being



led to imagine, from a ratchet in the hands of the trap-drummer, that his trousers have ripped, such a librettist—once his old standbys have been taken from him—is as completely at sea as a Canary Island. But being at sea doesn't buy yellow chamois gloves, green velour hats with little feathers on the sides, and Fatimas. And there is need for hocus-pocus. And it is this hocus-pocus, this substitute for invention and imagination, for even a second-rate skill—a substitute as transparent as a Red Raven split—that is every other night dished out as a libretto to the native music show audience.

In the "Greenwich Village Follies," for example, the librettist (modeling weakly after the old Cohan revue formula) resorts to the now long stale and manifest evasion of having one character stop suddenly toward the conclusion of the show and ask what has become of the libretto, and of bringing another character then with a five-ton facetiousness to remark that it was so poor that the manager decided at the last moment not to produce it. In the "Gaieties of 1919," the librettist—unable to think up anything better than having the portrait of a girl come to life during the leading man's dream and then causing the leading man to follow the "dream girl" through a dozen or more scenes to gay Paree—seeks to cover up his inspirational doldrums by putting in a prologue wherein he wheezishly trots out a decrepit old man with long white whiskers, calls him Mr. Plot and observes that he has been doing service in the music shows of this particular management for more than twenty-five years and seems to be still at it.

And thus it goes, evening after evening. The "Follies" with its peculiarly apt and seasonable bull-fight burlesque wherein the comedian rigged out as a toreador observes jocosely that he is a champion when it comes to "throwing the bull," the "Scandals of 1919" with its curtain lifting on a scene showing a three-mile-limit saloon off New York and then disclosing by way of satire

chiefly a comedian dressed up as a waiter who stumbles with a tray of glasses, and the other shows with their lubberly shifts and guiles in concealing their librettists' unfitness for their tasks—how forlornly they stand at Battery Park, how wistfully they look out over the seas, how eagerly they crook their fingers to the Guitrys and Rips of France. And how blindly, too, they turn their backs to those comic fellows of America who might add to their matchless opulence and beauty a touch of satire, a touch of burlesque and touch of wit above that of the Pantages circuit, the actors' club barroom and the annual show of the Sock and Buskin Club of the Auburn Theological Seminary.

### III

OF the innumerable Broadway daisies that these old specs. have reconnoitered, none has been more frankly unblushing than Mr. Broadhurst's dramatization of a novel named "The Crimson Alibi." For where the usual play written at the box-office makes at least a more or less prudent pretense of giving the public a love-tap or two and thus flattering its two dollars away from it, this Broadhurst address casts timidity to the winds and goes after the two dollars with a blackjack. Doubtless believing—and correctly—that nothing can be made too fatuous for the native quacksalver, Mr. Broadhurst has gone at the job of popping him with a bravado which, should it fail, will fail not because of the bravado but because Mr. Broadhurst has chosen a somewhat weak medium for its exploitation and because, further, he would seem to lack in this instance the theatrical skill necessary to its proper projection. The high theatrical sagacity of George M. Cohan, combined with a bravado that makes Jesse James look like a shoplifter in a five-and-ten-cent store, has rarely failed to smouch the price of admission from the native theatergoer. But without at least a measure of this strategic sagacity mere



bravado gives itself away so unmistakably that even the most susceptible Broadway *belle poire* catches on to it.

As a vehicle for his exercise on the bravura theme, Mr. Broadhurst has selected the venerable literature anent the rich man goosed with a silver dagger and the foxy detective's galoppo after the murderer. In working out the composition, Mr. Broadhurst, as hitherto implied, has reasoned that a theater public that looks on any man who can make his hand tremble as a fine emotional actor and on any man who, after drawing a sword with a magnificent flourish, can get it back into the scabbard again without laboriously feeling around for the hole as a great romantic actor—that such a public is ready for damn near anything. And, thus reasoning, has maneuvered his stage and his fable with a complete disregard for even the fiction truths, playing loud hum with his audience right and left, taking advantage of its lack of memory, of its lack of perception even in the instance of such transparent proscenium didoes as this, and of its inability to recall one moment what has happened the moment before.

Thus, in the last act, the murderer who is announced to have worn red rubber gloves to prevent incriminating finger-prints in the prologue is shown in the prologue with bare white hands\*. Thus, the murderer who at a quarter of eleven is announced to have planned his crime with crafty deliberation is shown at quarter of nine using for that crime a paper-cutter which he casually encounters on the murdered man's table. To add to the hocus-pocus, it is suggested that the murderer, though he carried a revolver, carried also the rubber gloves for use in the handling of a silver paper-cutter of whose existence he was—it is fair to assume—unaware. The murderer, though fully certain that the crime has been lodged upon another, yet carries in his hand to the tribunal a ready bottle of poison.

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\*Or, at least, with deceptive gray rubber gloves.

The detective spots the guilty man eventually in a way presumably so occult that it is not vouchsafed to the audience. An ominous three-story winding stairway is revealed to jounce the audience with potential thrills—and nothing happens that couldn't happen on a level with the floor. . . . At this point, let me step aside and give over my pencil to the gentleman in the box-office.

I affect no impressive air of superiority as to the so-called mystery or detective story or play—one like "The Thirteenth Chair" diverts me occasionally in the same way as a sentimental little piece of writing like "The Romantic Journeys of Grandma" or "Little Girl"—but the thing has to be theatrically very well maneuvered or, even before the detective begins sniffing the parlour for the incriminating Flor de Cuba butt, I am already home and in bed. Lightly to amuse me, a mystery play must be a play first and a mystery second. Chesterton's "Magic" illustrates fairly well—if not too relevantly—what I mean. The element of mystery here serves the author merely as the slapstick serves Shaw: a compromise device wherewith hopefully to augment the guaranteed comparatively small and comparatively intelligent clientele with a sufficient number of hooligans to make the enterprise pay. But since the Chestertons and Shaws do not write detective plays for the popular theater, one has to be content with the dark meat.

The author of the average mystery or detective play designed for popular consumption works up his mystery with so assiduous a corkscrew and so much forearm work and so many grunts that by the time he is half-way through with his job one begins to amuse oneself less by watching the circumvolutions of the plot than by looking, as it were, through the plot and watching the attendant heart-rending perspirations of the author. There, in the background, behind the popguns, corpses, ruined women and Irish bloodhounds, is the poor soul discerned gallumphing



madly hither and thither with his salt shaker and veil, desperately shaking the former upon the tail of every character who by no human process of logic could conceivably have potted the deceased and painstakingly draping the latter over the one and only person on the platform who might reasonably be suspected of having done the deed.

Thus, piercing the traffic current upon the stage of the Republic Theater, one beholds one Dyar at the familiar business. Stripped to the buff and steaming like a stoker, one observes the gentleman furiously pulling wires, mislaying revolvers, ringing telephones, banging on doors, yelling "Hell", trotting out detectives, tweaking their noses, killing seducers, shooting off suspicions over both shoulders, casting foul stains upon virgins' honour, hiding murderers behind rocks and trees, pushing office buttons and lowering and raising lights in the customary attempt to inject a baffling mystery into a fable that is intrinsically about as baffling and mysterious as a glass of Schlitz.

The Dyar excitement (edited in part by Mr. Willard Mack) is called "A Voice In the Dark." The style of writing may be summed up in the suspected heroine's gulping appeal to the hero to look into her eyes and tell her *then* if he can believe her guilty of the crime. Like "The Crimson Alibi" the opus, in at least one instance, deliberately thumbs its nose at the trade by nonchalantly ignoring a situation that, if logically handled, would end the mystery part of the show in the middle of Act II.

#### IV

WITH the opening of the new theatrical season, the hill-billy drama vouchsafes further specimens apace. A true nugget of the line, for example, is to be found in the Rev. Thomas Dixon's "The Red Dawn," an effort on the part of the aforementioned venerable man of God to inform the populace on the grave dangers of socialism. The religious zeal of this particular shepherd of the Lord takes peculiar forms.

When he is not serving the Lord by writing rube-rufflers in which niggers rape small white girls he is busy serving the cause of the Kingdom of Heaven by writing moving pictures in which drunken, leering Germans amorously chase young Long Island society virgins around locked rooms. And when he is not serving the Saviour by turning out greenhorn pluckers embellished with such revelatory titles as "The Sins of the Father," "The Victim," "The Foolish Virgin" and "The Root of Evil," he is to be found unselfishly devoting his life to the church with such serious dramas as this "Red Dawn," the leading spiritual message of which is a hot hoochie coochie executed by Doraldina, the Reisenweber cabaret pet, assisted by a trio of half-stripped chorus girls.

The passionate sincerity and high purpose of the Rev. gentleman are clearly discernible in his every theatrical enterprise. He cares no whit about adding to his worldly fortunes if only, by showing the great masses of the people a representation of a big sweaty coon stalking a little white girl, he can thus relevantly and pointedly—and obviously without gain to himself—uplift them, teach them, and thus make life more beautiful. Nor does he care for mere gold—faugh!—if only he may bring the public to realize the glory of God with stage plays like "The Red Dawn" wherein a man seeks to sardou his niece and wherein a harlot relates her aptitude at maneuvering six men and gives at R 1 an example of her virtuosity in effecting assignations. A man of noble resolve, a great churchman, a notable bishop of the Uplift!

A second anti-socialism-bolshevism tract is to be encountered in Eugene Walter's "The Challenge". Though of a piece other than the noted divine's composition, this play reveals sharply the defects of the Broadway-made propaganda drama. The arguments advanced against socialism and bolshevism are the arguments of the melodrama stage. They are typified admir-



ably in the perfectly serious employment of the long since exposed hoax relating to the declaration by the Russian provincial bolshevist leaders that women were to be common property. The author is a capable melodramatist who should stick to his last. A man able to write the piano episode and the cat-choking episode of "The Assassin" had best leave the 2.75 per cent Brieux drama to—Brieux. Mr. Walter came much nearer writing a very good play in "The Assassin" than a great many persons—including himself, and to a certain degree, myself—were at the time persuaded to believe.

All of the plays mentioned in the last two chapters are, in the main, poorly acted. The best presentation of the lot is probably that of Mr. Broadhurst's "Crimson Alibi". The leading trouble with the Actors' Equity Association, judging from the recent work of its personnel, would seem to be that, while it has five thousand or more members, what it ought most to take in, in order to enhance its tone and standing, is an actor or so.

## V

THE actors' strike, raging as I write, is characteristically an actors' gesture. The claims and demands of the pantaloons, as claims and demands, seem not without their elements of fundamental justice: but these claims and demands, enunciated by the persons who presently voice them, become promptly transformed as by some droll pixy into the absurd. When plumbers or street-car motormen or railroad brakemen strike, what we have in the main is a strike of plumbers, street-car motormen or railroad brakemen: a strike by men at least capable of doing their work when they are working. But when actors strike, what we have in the main is a strike by persons who merely allege that they are actors, and who offer up the ridiculous spectacle of unskilled labour posing as skilled and seeking the reward of skilled. Take, at random, any labour union in America, great or

small, whether a union of ship-builders, bricklayers or waiters, and you will find it a union whose members in the mass know their profession, and are able to do the work they set out to do, and who—if fairly treated—are more or less courteous, considerate, willing. Take the Actors' Equity Association, or actors' union, on the other hand, and you have an organization nine out of ten of whose members cannot so much as walk across the stage or pronounce the word *irreparable* correctly unless taught by a director, and who even when treated honourably torment their employers, the managers, with a ham's hundred and one senseless vanities and eccentricities.

The actors have demanded that only two weeks of their time shall be given free of charge to the rehearsing of a new play. Mrs. Fiske, not a member of the union, has found it necessary to plan and scheme out a role for a full half year (without pay) before hazarding its public interpretation. Such illustrious members of the union as Edmund Breese and Robert T. Haines, imply that for them, after two weeks, Hamlet and Othello are puddings. . . . It is fair and it is just, as the actors contend, that a poor virgin of the chorus shall not be made to pay for her stage shoes and stockings, that if an actor plays extra matinees he shall be paid for playing them, and that a performer dismissed after several weeks of rehearsals shall be properly reimbursed, but it is not fair and it is not just that the managers be asked to treat with competent actors and incompetent actors in the mass, and upon the same terms. There are a number of capable men and women players in the American theater—the number isn't large, but as it goes it is respectable enough—and these capable players the managers have, by the players' own testimony, always treated well. The rest of the circus is composed of vainglorious, posturing and inept jackasses whom the managers, however ill they treat them, treat thrice too well.



# Mark Twain

By H. L. Mencken

IN "The Curious Republic of Gondour," a small volume of Mark Twain's early sketches, hitherto unpublished in book-form (*Boni-Live-right*), there is little that is of much intrinsic value, but nevertheless it is agreeable to see the collection get between covers, for even the slightest of Mark's work has its moments and should be accessible. He wrote these pieces during the year 1870, some of them for the *Buffalo Express*, in which he had lately acquired a proprietary interest, and the others for the *New York Galaxy*, to which he began contributing a monthly department in May, 1870. Some of the other things that he did for the *Galaxy* are well known, for he reprinted them in "Sketches Old and New." Yet others were done into a book by a Canadian pirate named Backus, and this book was republished in London. I doubt that the present volume has the *imprimatur* of the Clemens executors, or of the Harpers, who control the Mark Twain copyrights. But what if it hasn't? Mark was too vast a figure in the national letters to be edited after death by executors. Whatever he wrote, signed and published during his lifetime should be decently in print today, that readers may judge it for themselves. If, in the exercise of an incomprehensible discretion, his executors venture to suppress this or that, not as of legal right but simply because it offends their susceptibilities, then it seems to me competent for any other publisher to print it as he listeth. In the present case, as I say, no lost masterpiece is revealed, but nevertheless the stuff, in the main, is quite as good as that which

got into "Sketches Old and New." Incidentally, it shows an early flowering of two qualities that marked the great humorist very broadly in his later days, to wit, his curious weakness for the gruesome and his unshakable moral passion—his high indignation at whatever he conceived to be wrong. No one familiar with the Markian canon could possibly fail to recognize the authorship of "A Reminiscence of the Back Settlements" and "About Smells." Both the former, with its Rabelaisian sporting with the idea of death, and the latter, with its furious onslaught upon the Presbyterian Pecksniff, T. De Witt Talmage, are absolutely characteristic.

Such a collection, I repeat, has its uses, and it is a pity that it is not more extensive. The official edition of Mark, published by the Harpers, shows serious defects. For one thing, it is incomplete. For another thing, the binding is gaudy and inappropriate (though not, perhaps, so horribly hideous as the Mother Hubbard binding the Harpers put upon poor Dreiser). And for a third thing, most of the illustrations of the first editions are omitted. In a few cases this last is an improvement; the pictures in "Following the Equator," for example, were unspeakable. But just as certainly there is something lacking in "Huckleberry Finn" when it appears without the capital drawings of Kemble, and something lacking in "A Tramp Abroad" when any of those of Brown are omitted. It would be easy to reproduce all the original illustrations; it would restore to the earlier books something that is essential to their atmosphere. But it is not done. Neither is anything approaching fair



progress being made with the publication of the things that Mark left in manuscript, particularly his autobiography. He himself, I believe, desired that parts of it remain unprinted for a long while—he once proposed to the Harpers a contract providing for its publication a century after his death—but certainly there are other parts that might be done forthwith. As for me, I also grow restive waiting for "Three Thousand Years Among the Microbes," several pages of which are printed by Albert Bigelow Paine in the appendix to his excellent biography, and for the Bessie dialogues, and for "Letters From the Earth," and for "The War Prayer," and, above all, for "1601." The last-named was once privately printed and contraband copies are still occasionally circulated. Why not a decent edition of it? If the Comstocks are capable of sufficiently throttling their swinishness to permit the open publication and circulation of Walt Whitman's "A Woman Waits For Me," why shouldn't they consent to the printing of "1601"? Must it wait until some extraordinarily literate United States Senator reads it into the *Congressional Record*?

## II

THE older I grow the more I am convinced that Mark was, by long odds, the largest figure that ever reared itself out of the flat, damp prairie of American literature. He was great absolutely, but one must consider him relatively to get at the measure of his true greatness. Put him beside Emerson, or Whitman, or Hawthorne, or even Poe; he was palpably the superior of all of them. What ailed the whole quartette was a defective contact with their environment, an aloofness from the plain facts of life, a sort of incurable other-worldliness. Emerson was always half lost in the shadows; toward the end of his life they closed upon him completely. The ideas that he spoke for, in the main, were ideas borrowed from men in far lands, and for all his eloquence he never got into them any sense of

their pressing importance to the men of his own country. He was the academic theorist *par excellence*. He inhabited a world of mystical abstractions. The very folks who yielded most readily to his souging phrases were furthest from grasping their exact import; to this day he is chiefly the philosopher, not of men who think clearly and accurately, but of half-educated dolts whose thinking is all a mellow and witless booziness. A man of extraordinary mental equipment and of even more extraordinary nobility of character, he failed both as a great teacher and as a great artist because of his remoteness from the active, exigent life that he was a part of. Set here in the America of the nineteenth century, begirt by politics, railways and commercial enterprise (and no less by revivals, cuspidors and braggadocio), he carried on his inquiries in the manner of a medieval monk, and his conclusions showed all the nebulousness that one associates with the monkish character. To this day his speculations have had no appreciable influence upon American ways of thought. His only professed disciples, in fact, are the votaries of what is called the New Thought, and these idiots libel him quite as absurdly as the Methodists, say, burlesque Christ.

The intellectual foreignness and loneliness of Hawthorne, Whitman and Poe is scarcely less noticeable. They lived in the republic, but were anything but of it. Hawthorne concerned himself with psychological problems that were not only inordinately obscure and labored, but even archaic; his enterprise, in his chief work, might almost be called an attempt to psychoanalyze the dead. It would be ridiculous to say that there was anything in his books that was characteristic of his time and his country. The gusto of a man thoroughly at home in his surroundings was simply not in him, and it is surely not surprising to hear that while he was physically present in America he lived like a hermit, and that his only happiness was found abroad. Whitman was even more solitary. The democracy he



dreamed of was simply a figment of his imagination; it had no more relation to the reality sprawling before him than the Sermon on the Mount has to the practical ethic of the average Christian ecclesiastic. His countrymen, recognizing the conflict, regarded him generally as a loafer and a scoundrel, and it was only after foreign enthusiasts began to cry him up that he emerged from the constant threat of going to jail. As for Poe, he was almost the complete antithesis of a great national artist. In the midst of the most sordid civilization ever seen on earth and in the face of a population of utter literalists, he devoted himself grandly to *héliogabalisme*. His countrymen, in the main, were quite unaware of his stature while he lived. They regarded Cooper and Irving as incomparably greater artists, and such eighth-raters as N. P. Willis as far cleverer men. When they went to the works of Poe at all they went to them as, a generation later, they went to Barnum's circus—that is, as to an entertainment fantastic and somehow discreditable—one to be enjoyed now and then, but not too often. The Baptist critic, Rufus W. Griswold, accurately expressed the national view; his judgment was not challenged for years. An American boy of 1848 who had conceived the ambition of becoming a second Poe would have been caned until his very pantaloons took fire.

At the bottom of this isolation of Poe and Whitman and Hawthorne and Emerson there was, of course, the dense ignorance of a nation in a very backward state of culture; a Beethoven or a Mozart or an El Greco, set down amid the same scenes, would have got the same cold shoulder. But the fault, obviously, was not all on one side; the men themselves lacked something. What that something was I have already indicated. It may be described briefly as responsiveness, observation, aliveness, a sense of reality, a joy in life. Around them roared a great show; it was dramatic, thrilling, unprecedented; above all, it was intensely amusing. And yet they were as un-

conscious of it as so many deaf men at a combat of brass bands. Only Whitman seemed to have the slightest notion that anything was going on—and Whitman mistook the show for a great sacrament, a cheap and gaudy circus for a sort of Second Coming of Christ. Well, such lofty detachment is not the habit of great artists. It was not the habit of Shakespeare, or of Cervantes, or of Goethe, or of Pushkin, or Thackeray, or of Balzac. More important to our present purpose, it was not the habit of Mark Twain. Mark was the first of our great national artists to be whole-heartedly and enthusiastically American. He was the first to immerse himself willingly and with gusto in the infinitely picturesque and brilliant life of his time and country. He was the first to understand the common man of his race, and to interpret him fairly, honestly and accurately. He was the first to project brilliantly, for the information and entertainment of all the world, the American point of view, the American philosophy of life, the American character, the American soul. He would have been a great artist, I believe, even on the high-flung plane of Emerson or Hawthorne. He would have been *konzertmeister* even among the *umbilicarii*. But being what he was, his greatness was enormously augmented. He stands today at the head of the line. He is the one indubitable glory of American letters.

### III

THE bitter, of course, goes with the sweet. To be an American is, unquestionably, to be the noblest, the grandest, the proudest mammal that ever hoofed the verdure of God's green footstool. Often, in the black abyss of the night, the thought that I am one awakens me like a blast of trumpets, and I am thrown into a cold sweat by contemplation of the fact. I shall cherish it on the scaffold; it will console me in hell. But, as I have said, there is no perfection under heaven, and so even an American has his small blemishes, his



scarcely discernible weaknesses, his minute traces of vice and depravity. Mark, alas, had them; he was as thoroughly American as a Knight of Pythias, a Wheeling stogie or Prohibition. One might almost exhibit his effigy in a museum as the archetype of the *Homo Americanus*. And what were these stigmata that betrayed him? In chief, they were two in number, and both lay at the very foundation of his character. On the one hand, there was his immovable moral certainty, his firm belief that he knew what was right from what was wrong, and that all who differed from him were, in some obscure way, men of an inferior and sinister order. And on the other hand, there was his profound intellectual timorousness, his abiding fear of his own ideas, his incurable cowardice in the face of public disapproval. These two characteristics colored his whole thinking; they showed themselves in his every attitude and gesture. They were the visible signs of his limitation as an Emersonian Man Thinking, and they were the bright symbols of his nationality. He was great in every way that an American could be great, but when he came to the border of his Americanism he came to the end of his greatness.

The true Mark Twain is only partly on view in his actual books—that is, in his printed books. To get the rest of the portrait you must go to Paine's exhaustive and fascinating biography—a work so engrossing as a character study that, despite its three volumes and more than 1,700 pages, I have gone through it three times. The real Mark was not the amiable jester of the white dress suit, the newspaper interviews and the after-dinner speeches. He was not the somewhat heavy-handed satirist of "A Tramp Abroad" and "Tom Sawyer." He was not even the extraordinarily fine and delicate artist of "Joan of Arc" and "Huckleberry Finn." Nay, he was a different bird altogether—an intensely serious and even lugubrious man, an iconoclast of the most relentless sort, a man not so much amused by the spectacle of life as appalled by it, a pessi-

mist to the last degree. Nothing could be more unsound than the Mark legend—the legend of the light-hearted and kindly old clown. Study the volumes of Paine and you will quickly discern its unsoundness. The real Mark was a man haunted to the point of distraction by the endless and meaningless tragedy of existence—a man whose thoughts turned to it constantly, in season and out of season. And to think, with him, was to write; he was, for all his laziness, the most assiduous of scribblers; he piled up notes, sketches of books and articles, even whole books, about it, almost mountain high.

Well, why did these notes, sketches, articles and books get no further? Why do most of them remain unprinted, even today? You will find the answer in a prefatory note that Mark appended to "What Is Man?" published privately in 1905. I quote it in full:

The studies for these papers were begun twenty-five or twenty-seven years ago. The papers were written seven years ago. I have examined them once or twice per year since and found them satisfactory. I have just examined them again, and am still satisfied that they speak the truth. Every thought in them has been thought (and accepted as unassailable truth) by millions upon millions of men—and concealed, kept private. Why did they not speak out? Because they dreaded (and could not bear) the disapproval of the people around them. Why have I not published? The same reason has restrained me, I think. I can find no other.

Imagine a man writing so honest and excellent a book, imagine him examining it and re-examining it and always finding it good—and yet holding off the printing of it for twenty-five years, and then issuing it timorously and behind the door, in an edition of 250 copies, none of them for sale! Even his death did not quench his fear. His executors, taking it over as part of his goods, withheld the book for five years more—and then printed it very discreetly, with the betraying preface omitted! Surely it would be impossible in the literature of any other civilized country since the Middle Ages to find anything to match that long hesitation. Here was a man of the highest dignity in the national



letters, a man universally recognized to be their chief living adornment, and here was a book into which he had put the earnest convictions of his lifetime, a book carefully and deliberately written, a book representing him more accurately than any other, both as artist and as man—and yet it had to wait thirty-five years before it saw the light of day! An astounding affair, in all conscience—but thoroughly American, Messieurs, thoroughly American! Mark knew his countrymen. He knew their intense suspicion of ideas, their blind hatred of heterodoxy, their bitter way of dealing with dissenters. He knew how, their pruderies outraged, they would turn upon even the gaudiest hero and roll him in the mud. And knowing, he was afraid. He “dreaded the disapproval of the people around him.” And part of that dread, I suspect, was peculiarly internal. In brief, Mark himself was also an American, and he shared the national horror of the unorthodox. His own speculations always half appalled him. He was not only afraid to utter what he believed; he was even a bit timorous about *believing* what he believed.

The weakness takes a good deal from his stature. It leaves him radiating a subtle flavor of the second-rate. With more courage, he would have gone a great deal further, and left a far deeper mark upon the intellectual history of his time. Not, perhaps, intrinsically as artist. He got as far in that direction as it is possible for a man of his training to go. “Huckleberry Finn” is a truly stupendous piece of work—perhaps the greatest novel ever written in English. And it would be difficult to surpass the sheer artistry of such things as “A Connecticut Yankee,” “Captain Stormfield,” “Joan of Arc” and parts of “A Tramp Abroad.” But there is more to the making of literature than the mere depiction of human beings at their obscene follies; there is also the play of ideas. Mark had ideas that were clear, that were vigorous, and that had an immediate appositeness. True enough, most of them were not quite original. As Prof. Schoenemann, of Harvard,

has lately demonstrated, he got the notion of “The Mysterious Stranger” from Adolf Wilbrandt’s “Der Meister von Palmyra”; much of “What Is Man?” you will find in the forgotten harangues of Ingersoll; in other directions he borrowed right and left. But it is only necessary to read either of the books I have just mentioned to see how thoroughly he recast everything he wrote; how brilliantly it came to be marked by the charm of his own personality; how he got his own peculiar and unmatched eloquence into the merest statement of it. When, entering these regions of his true faith, he yielded to a puerile timidity—when he sacrificed his conscience and his self-respect to the idiotic popularity that so often more than half dishonored him—then he not only did a cruel disservice to his own permanent fame, but inflicted genuine damage upon the national literature. He was greater than all the others because he was more American, but in this one way, at least, he was less than them for the same reason. . . .

Well, there he stands—a bit concealed, a bit false, but still a colossus. As I said at the start, I am inclined year by year to rate his achievement higher. In such a work as “Huckleberry Finn” there is something that vastly transcends the merit of all ordinary books. It has a merit that is special and extraordinary; it lifts itself above all hollow standards and criteria; it seems greater every time I read it. The books that gave Mark his first celebrity do not hold up so well. “The Jumping Frog” still wrings snickers, but, after all, it is commonplace at bottom; even an Ellis Parker Butler might have conceivably written it. “The Innocents Abroad,” re-read today, is largely tedious. Its humors are artificial; its audacities are stale; its eloquence belongs to the fancy journalism of a past generation. Even “Tom Sawyer” and “A Tramp Abroad” have long stretches of flatness. But in “Huckleberry Finn,” though he didn’t know it at the time and never quite realized it, Mark found himself. There, working



against the grain, heartily sick of the book before it was done, always putting it off until tomorrow, he hacked out a masterpiece that expands as year chases year. There, if I am not wrong, he produced the greatest work of the imagination that These States have yet seen.

#### IV

OF the novels of the month there is not much to be said. "Ramsay Milholland," by Booth Tarkington (*Doubleday*), is another tale of youth, but the charm that was in the "Penrod" books and in "Seventeen" is simply not there. Mr. Tarkington is unwise to boil the same bones too often. "La Bodega," by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (*Dutton*), is another hortatory tale by the Spanish Upton Sinclair. It is devoted, in the main, to an exposition of the agrarian situation in Spain and ends with a hymn to the Social Revolution. Like Sinclair, this Señor Blasco is a fellow of considerable skill at writing, but, like Sinclair again, he smothers his stories with indignation. His present popularity in America will not last long; by next Spring he will be as completely forgotten as Artsybashev, Henry Bordeaux or Gabrielle D'Annunzio. Americans are forever falling for sensational novelists from beyond the seas, and whenever the publishers' calliopes, ophicleides and tom-toms announce a new one all the old ones are instantly swept from the board. Perhaps the next candidate for adulation is Tatsunosuke Hasegawa, the Jap, whose "Sono Omokage" has just been Englished under the title of "An Adopted Husband" (*Knopf*). This Hasegawa, who died in 1909, was the first Japanese novelist—that is, in the European sense—and "Sono Omokage" is regarded by native connoisseurs as his greatest work. It is thoroughly oriental in theme and treatment, but I have read it without pain.

Perhaps the best novel in the current crop is "The Groper," by Henry G. Aikman (*Boni-Liveright*). It is apparently the work of a débutant and it

shows a good many crudities, but nevertheless there is soundness at the bottom of it, and all the author needs is humor to lift himself far above the general. Lee Hillquit, the chief character, forsakes the small town of Chatham, Mich., to seek his fortune in Detroit, leaving his best girl, Vera Wakefield, behind. After various sordid adventures, including a term of service as a seller of cheap suburban lots, he attracts the attention of the widow of a department-store magnate and at her behest is given a job in the store. Unluckily, this somewhat mature Samaritan conceives an illicit passion for the young man, and, after brief preliminary manoeuvres, works her wicked will upon him. It takes him a long while to shake off her increasingly loathsome caresses. Worse, when he shakes them off at last, he finds that they have permanently soured his native virtue, and so he takes to the primrose path. His irregularities, however, do not impede his material success. He becomes assistant advertising manager of the department-store, and then advertising manager, and from this lofty perch he steps off into business for himself, and is soon the head of a very prosperous automobile factory. But when the war comes there is a shortage of materials that ruins the factory, and so he goes back to the store. At the same time he gets ready to marry his old sweetheart from Chatham, who has married another in the interval, but found him too rough. The story, now and then, gets perilously close to burlesque, but it somehow wobbles through without collapse. Mr. Aikman, I fancy, is a diligent student of Frank Norris. Let him stick to that model: it is a good one. But let him bear in mind that it was deadly seriousness, in "The Octopus," that came near finishing Norris.

Daniel Carson Goodman, in "The Taker" (*Boni-Liveright*), is even more solemn than Aikman, and with far more disastrous results. The change of a few sentences, in fact, would convert his story into a capital burlesque of Dreiser's "The Genius." Leonard Ver-



non, the hero, is a man who uses up women as a great general uses up soldiers. First his tentacles seize poor Jennie Clemons, the daughter of Jacob Clemons, proprietor of the Clemons Art Glass Works at Hastings-on-the-Hudson, N. Y. He marries Jennie, inherits the glass works on her father's convenient decease, and then turns his baleful eye upon Mabel Gillette, a stenographer in his office. Jennie thereupon gets a divorce, and he marries Mabel, but they have scarcely settled down when he is casting his spell over Marcy Moore, a working girl in the factory. Marcy already has a husband, a young workman named Lester Moore, and one day Lester shoots Leonard and burns down the Clemons glass works. Lester, of course, has to flee after this, and when Leonard gets over his wound he sets up a magnificent apartment for Marcy in New York. Mabel, hearing of it, now commits suicide. Then Marcy, fearing that Leonard is tiring of her, commits suicide. Then Leonard himself, despairing of ever finding a woman to suit him, tries to commit suicide also. But his life is spared, and as the curtain falls he goes back to Jennie. His search for the perfect woman is obviously hopeless. He is one of those unfortunate men who seek a great love and never find it. The chronicle of his quest makes an extraordinarily banal book—a book full of infantile highfalutin and tedious artificiality. The same author once wrote a very fair novel called "Hagar Revelly." "The Taker" is miles and miles below it.

"The Choice," by Maurice Weyl (*Kennerley*), is obviously the work of an unaccustomed hand. The story, one feels, is a good deal sentimentalized, and the dialogue is full of harsh *canonots*. But the thing remains readable, and so it stands out from the common run of fiction. The heroine is a beautiful telephone operator with the fantastic name of Asenath McBride. This Asenath, as I say, is beautiful; she is also very ignorant; she has never read a book. Nevertheless, she is not debauched by the nearest Wine Jack, as

one might reasonably expect. On the contrary, all the men she meets seem eager to marry her. The first half of the story shows how near she comes to becoming the bride of Jim Rawlings, a paying teller in a bank, whose sister, Mrs. Dunne, is high up in Philadelphia society. One of Jim's legs is actually over the altar rail before his sister's insidious arts convince him that marriage into the McBride family, whose head is a foreman in a packing-box factory, would probably turn out, in the end, a bitter dose. Then comes Harold Larned, an electrical engineer. What gives Harold pause is not the packing-box factory, but the fact that old McBride is a strict Presbyterian. Asenath, however, is so beautiful that he takes the chance—and it is a year after the marriage before he and McBride make peace. By that time, alas, he has begun to view Asenath herself somewhat critically. He has, to be sure, a great pulchritude, but she is fundamentally an idiot. Harold, however, does not kick her out. Idiot or not, she is still a nice girl, and so, as the curtain falls, we see him resolved to make the best of it. One cannot have everything.

The other novels are bosh—all save "The Young Visitors," by Daisy Ashford (*Doran*). By the time these lines reach your eye, I daresay you will have heard of it, for it is introduced by James M. Barrie, and it has already made a great success in England. The *imprimatur* of Barrie, of course, is worth little. He is a sentimental old fellow, and is constantly lured into such amiabilities by publishers who know how to handle him. But this time he lauds something genuinely delightful—a romantic love story written by a girl of nine years, and printed exactly as she wrote it. Nothing more gorgeously comic has reached me since the dime-novel in the first chapter of "Penrod." It is a glittering pile of absurdities, and yet there is not an instant when one doubts the *bona fides* of it. No adult wag, indeed, could have invented such a piece. The *Weltanschauung* of nine years is in every line of it. . . .





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